A

DISCOURSE

OF

Ecclesiastical Politie:

WHEREIN

The Authority of the Civil Magistrate over the Consciences of Subjects in Matters of External Religion is Asserted.

The Mischiefs and Inconveniences

OF

Toleration

are Represented,

And all Pretenses Pleaded in Behalf of

Liberty of Conscience

are fully Answered. by Sam. Parker

The Third Edition.

LONDON,

Printed for *John Martyn* at the Bell in St *Paul's* Church-yard, 1671.

The PREFACE TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Cannot Imagine any thing, that our Diſſenting Zealots will be able to object againſt this Enſuing Treatiſe, unleſs perhaps in ſome Places the Vehemence and Severity of its Style; for cavil I know they muſt: and if they can raiſe no Tolerable Exceptions againſt the Reaſonableneſs of the Diſcourſe it ſelf, it ſhall ſuffice to pick quarrels with Words and Phraſes. But I will aſſure thee, the Author is a Perſon of ſuch a tame and ſoftly humour, and ſo cold a Complexion, that he thinks himſelf ſcarce capable of hot and paſſionate Impreſſions: and therefore if he has ſometimes twiſted Invectives with his Arguments, it proceeded not from Temper but from Choice; and if there be any Tart and Upbraiding Expreſſions, they were not the Dictates of Anger or Paſſion, but of the Juſt and Pious Reſentments of his Mind. And I ap-

peal to any Man, who knows upon what ſober Grounds and Principles the Reformation of the Church of England *ſtands; and how that its* Forms *and* Inſtitutions *are not only countenanced by the beſt and pureſt times of Chriſtianity, but eſtabliſht by the Fundamental Laws of the Land; whether he can ſo perfectly Charm and Stupifie his Paſſions, as not to be chafed into ſome heat & briskneſs? when he ſeriouſly conſiders, that this Church ſo rightly conſtituted, and ſo duely authoriſed ſhould be ſo ſavagely worried by a Wild and Fanatique Rabble; that this Church ſo ſoberly modelled, ſo warrantably reformed, and ſo handſomly ſettled, ſhould have been ſo perpetually beleaguered, and be yet not out of all danger of being rifled, if not utterly demoliſht by Folly and Ignorance; that the publick Peace and Settlement of a Nation ſhould be ſo wofully diſcompoſed upon ſuch ſlender and frivolous Pretenſes, and that, after they have been ſo often and ſo ſhamefully baffled; that both Church and State ſhould be ſo lamentably embroyl'd by the Pride and Inſolence of a few peeviſh ignorant and malepert Preachers; And laſtly, that theſe Brain-ſick People, if not prevented by ſome ſpeedy and effe-*

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ctual Remedy, may in a little time grow to that Power and Confidence, as to be able (to uſe their own Language) to *ſhut the Heavens that they ſhall not rain, *i. e.* to reſtrain the Higheſt Powers of Church and State from their wonted Influence; and to have Power over the Waters to turn them into Blood, *i. e.* to turn the ſtill People of a State or Nation into War and Blood: *or, to ſpeak in our own plain* Engliſh, *to tye the Hands of Authority, to inſtigate the people of God to Rebellion, and once more involve the Kingdom in Blood and Confuſion. Let the Reader conſider all this, as throughly and ſeriouſly as I have done, and then be a Stoick if he can.*

* *Vide* Continuation of the Friendly Debate, *pag.* 120, *&c.*

But beſides this, let any man, that is acquainted with the Wiſdom and Sobriety of True Religion, tell me, how 'tis poſſible not to be provoked to ſcorn and indignation againſt ſuch proud, ignorant, and ſupercilious Hypocrites; who though they utterly defeat all the main Deſigns of Religion, yet boaſt themſelves its only Friends and Patrons; ſignalize their Party by diſtinctive Titles and Characters of Godlineſs, and brand all others, howſoever Pious and

Peaceable, with bad Names, and worſe Suſpicions? who I ſay, that loves and adores the Spirit of true Religion, can forbear to be ſharp and ſevere to ſuch thick and fulſom abuſes? In that there is not any thing can ſo much expoſe or traduce true Piety, as this ſort of Hypocriſie; becauſe whilſt Folly and Phantaſtry appears in the Vizour of Holineſs, it makes that ſeem as ridiculous as it ſelf. And hence the greateſt Friends of true Goodneſs have always been the ſevereſt Satyriſts upon Falſe Godlineſs; and our Bleſſed Saviour ſcarce ſeemed more concern'd to plant and propagate Chriſtianity, than to explode the Phariſaick Hypocriſie, i. e. *Religious Pride and Inſolence.*

I know but one ſingle Inſtance, in which Zeal, or a high Indignation is juſt and warrantable; and that is when it vents it ſelf againſt the Arrogance of haughty, peeviſh, and ſullen Religioniſts, that under higher pretences to Godlineſs ſupplant all Principles of Civility and good Nature; that ſtrip Religion of its outſide to make it a covering for Spight and Malice; that adorn their peeviſhneſs with the Mask of Piety, and ſhroud their Ill Nature under the demure pretences of Godly Zeal; And

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ſtroak and applaud themſelves as the only Darlings and Favourites of Heaven, and with a ſcornful pride diſdain all the Reſidue of Mankind, as a Rout of worthleſs and unregenerate Reprobates. Thus the only hot fit of Zeal we find our Saviour in, was kindled by an Indignation againſt the Pride and Inſolence of the Jews, when he whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the outward Court of the Temple: For though they bore a blind and ſuperſtitious Reverence towards that part of it, that was peculiar to their own Worſhip, yet as for the outward Court, the place where the Gentiles and Proſelytes worſhip't, that was ſo unclean & unhallowed, that they thought it could not be prophaned, by being turn'd into an Exchange of Uſury. Now this Inſolent Contempt of the Gentiles, and impudent conceit of their own holineſs, provoked the mild Spirit of our Bleſſed Saviour to ſuch an height of Impatience and Indignation as made him with a ſeeming fury and tranſport of paſſion whip the Tradeſmen thence, and overthrow the Tables. So hateful is all proud, teſty, and factious Zeal to a loving and Divine Temper of mind. And indeed what can we imagine more odious or miſchievous than a ſpirit of Pride,

Pecvishness, and Animosity adopted into the Service of God? This divides Religion into Factions and Parties, engenders a sullen and unsociable Niceness towards all that herd not with themselves, breeds nothing but rancour, malice and envy, and every thing that is destructive of the Common Peace and Amity of Mankind. And when People Separate and Rendevouz themselves into distinct Sects and Parties, they always confine all their kind Influences to their own Faction, and look with a scornful and malignant Aspect upon all the rest of Mankind, become Enemies and Outlaws to Humane Society, and shatter in pieces that natural Peace and common Love, that preserves the Welfare and Tranquillity of Humane Nature. Their minds (like the savage Americans*) are as contracted as their Herds, and all that are not within the Fold of their Church, are without the Sphere of their Charity: this is entirely swallowed up within their own combination, and 'tis no part of their duty to commiserate or supply the Wants of the Unregenerate. As the Poet describes the* Jewish *Bigots,*

Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere Verpos.

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They would not ſo much as direct the way to any but a circumciſed Brother, nor beſtow a Cup of cold Water upon a thirſty Samaritan. *The Elect are confined to their own Party, and all beſides are the Wicked and Reprobate of the Earth, hated of God, and unfit to be beloved by his People. And this poſſeſſes their minds with a holy Inhumanity; and then, if the Saints ever get into Power, no Tyrant ſo cruel and butcherly; and they have the ſame eſteem of the Wicked as of Inſects or Vermin, and uſe them accordingly: But when they are out of Power, they are then forced to ſupport their Malice with Slanders and Calumnies and proud Compariſons: when they meet and goſſip together, How do they congratulate each other, that they are not as this or that Formaliſt? and the greateſt part of their Idle Tattle is uſually ſpent either in Cenſuring or Pitying, or Slandering ſome of their Neighbours, as poor carnal and unconverted Wretches. And when they deign to converſe with the Unregenerate and Men of the World,* i. e. *all out of their own Rowt, they make them keep their diſtance; and the Language of their Deportment is that of their Predeceſſors in the Prophet* Iſaiah: ſtand by thy ſelf, come

come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. *In brief, whoever is proud and conceited upon the ſcore of Religion, naturally falls into the moſt ſavage inſolence and baſeneſs of* Nature, *and is utterly uncapable of being either good* Subject, *or good* Neighbour.

Now to laſh theſe moroſe and churliſh Zealots *with ſmart and twinging* Satyrs, *is ſo far from being a criminal paſſion, that 'tis a zeal of Meekneſs and* Charity, *and a proſecution of the grand and diffuſive duty of humanity, and proceeds only from an earneſt deſire to maintain the common* Love *and* Amity *of* Mankind. *And though good manners oblige us to treat all other ſorts of* People *with gentle and civil* Language; *yet when we have to do with the* Scribes *and* Phariſees, *we muſt point our* Reproofs *with ſharp* Invectives, *we muſt diſcover them to themſelves to humble them; we muſt lance their* Tumour, *and take out the* Core *of their proud* Fleſh *before we can cure them; Anodynes and ſofter* Medicines *make no* Impreſſions *upon them, to treat them ſmoothly does but feed the humour; ſoft and tender* Words *do but tempt their diſdain, and ſooth up their* Vanity; *they think you flatter and fawn upon*

upon them, if you ſpeak them fair, your Civility they will interpret Reſpect, and a forced Eſteem of their Godlineſs. They know that you and the reſt of the World hate the people of God, and would uſe them baſely and inhumanely; but that the greatneſs of their Piety gives check to your Malice, and, in ſpight of all your outragious Paſſion againſt them, extorts a more gentle uſage, if not a ſecret Love and Veneration. But beſide, that ſoft Reproofs do but cocker their preſumption, they would ſuffer true Goodneſs to be run down by the violence of Ignorance and Zeal. And to think to argue rude and boyſtrous Zealots out of their folly meerly by the ſtrength of calm and ſober Reaſon, is as likely a matter as to endeavour by fair words to perſwade the Northern Wind into a Southern Point. If you will ever ſilence them, you muſt be as vehement as they: nothing but Zeal can encounter Zeal. And he that will oppoſe the Phariſees, muſt do it with their Eagerneſs, though not their Malice. Clamour and Confidence make ſtronger Impreſſions upon the common people, than ſtrength of Reaſon; and the Rabble ever runs to that Party, that raiſes the biggeſt noiſe. And therefore ſeeing we

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are not so ill-bred, as to oppose Clamour to Clamour; we must supply our want of Noise and Throat (as our Saviour did in his Invectives against the Pharisees) by Sharpness and Severity. And though there is but little ground to hope that the keenest Reasons should be able to pierce their thick and inveterate prejudices; yet however the sharper Edge they have, the deeper they will stick in the minds of those, whose Concern and Interest it is to punish and correct them. For I am not so vain as to design, or expect their own Conviction: as good attempt the Removal of Mountains, as of some mens Scruples. And I remember the Italian *proverb*, Chi lava la Testa d'al Asino perde il Sapone. *And therefore I never proposed to my self any other aim in this following Discourse, than by representing the palpable inconsistency of Fanatick Tempers and Principles with the Welfare and security of Government, to awaken Authority to beware of its worst and most dangerous Enemies, and to force them to that Modesty and Obedience by severity of Laws, to which all the strength of Reason in the world can never perswade them.*

When I first resolved upon this Undertaking,

taking, the Main Deſign in my Thoughts, was to repreſent to the World the lamentable Folly and Sillineſs of theſe mens Religion, and to ſhew what pitiful and incompetent Guides of their Actions their own Conſciences are; and that to leave them to the Government of their own Perſwaſions, is only to deliver them up to be abuſed by all manner of Vices and Follies; and that when they have debaucht their minds with Pride, Ignorance, Self-love, Ambition, Peeviſhneſs, Malice, Envy, Surlineſs, and Superſtition, &c. they then beſtow the Authority and Sacredneſs of Conſcience upon their moſt violent, boiſterous, and ungovernable paſſions: In brief, that their Conſciences are ſeized on by ſuch moroſe and ſurly Principles, as make them, the rudeſt and moſt barbarous people in the World; and that in compariſon of them, the moſt inſolent of the Phariſees were Gentlemen, and the moſt ſavage of the Americans *Philoſophers. But in this Deſign I found my ſelf happily prevented by a late Learned and ingenious Diſcourſe,* The Friendly Debate, *that has unravel'd all their affected Phraſes with ſo much perſpicuity of Wit, diſcovered the Feebleneſs of their beloved Notions, with*

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ſo much Clearneſs of Reaſon, demonſtrated the Wildneſs of their Practices by ſo many pregnant and undeniable Teſtimonies, expoſed the palpable unwarrantableneſs of their Schiſm, the ſhameful Prevarication of their Pretences, and utter inconſiſtency of their Principles with Publick Peace & Settlement; and in brief, ſo evidently convicted the Leaders in the faction of ſuch inexcuſable Knavery, and their followers of ſuch a dull and ſtubborn ſimplicity; that 'tis impoſſible any thing ſhould hold out againſt ſo much force of Reaſon and Demonſtration, but invincible Impudence and Obſtinacy: And when men inſconce themſelves in their own Wills, they are there Impregnable. Wilfulneſs is enchanted Armour, upon which the ſharpeſt Steel makes no Impreſſion; and they are ſecure from the Power of conviction, that are unalterably reſolved never to be convinced. Otherwiſe nothing could be more apparent to any man (that has but a competent knowledge of the Nature of the things there debated) that never any Cauſe in the world was more ſhamefully baffled and triumphed over, than this of Schiſmatical Non-conformity. And though it has gaul'd them into an implacable rage and indignation (for that

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as Solomon *obſerves, is the humour of ſome ſorts of men, to rage and be confident, when they are convinced) yet in ſpight of Affronts and Provocations, it has found them a tame and patient People, that can generouſly endure to ſee themſelves ſo ſmartly pelted for their Folly and Villany, and never ſo much as ſnarl, or attempt to faſten upon thoſe Weapons, that have ſo ſorely bruiſed them; and as for thoſe little Cattel that have been ſo hardy as to nibble at a Reply, they have only put us in mind of the old Fable of the Serpent and the File, and have proved nothing but the ſtrength of their Folly, and weakneſs of their Teeth; and all of them may wear their Fangs to the Roots, before they make any Impreſſion upon the Body of the Diſcourſe.*

The main and moſt popular Objection, I could ever meet with againſt it, is its form and method, viz. *its being written in way of Dialogue; in which way of writing (they ſay) a witty man may make any thing look as uncouth and ridiculous as he pleaſes. And this is true, in abſurd and inartificial Dialogues; but when they are skilfully contrived (as this is) there is no way of arguing more ſmart and convictive: For the Deſign of ſuch Compoſures is to repreſent*

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the Authors own thoughts upon occasion of something affirm'd or intimated by the Counter-party; and therefore if his own Discourse be rational and concluding, there is nothing more required to that of the other Party, than that his talk be agreeable to the pretenses of those men he Personates: So that, if the Authors own Arguments and Opinions (that are the Substance of the Treatise) be unreproveable, 'tis not material how wise his Adversaries Discourse is, so it be not false. Neither would he require them to defend and justifie every thing that is said in the Person of the Non-conformist (for many things are collateral, and only design'd to set off his Reasonings with a comical humour and pleasantness) but only to reply to the Scope and Substance of his Book by justifying their own Notions that he has confuted, and by confuting those that he has asserted. Which unless they shew themselves able to perform, they must acknowledge he has perfectly shamed their Folly, and unmaskt their Hypocrisie.

But besides, this being but a general Exception, must by the Laws of Reasoning pass not only for a precarious but a false Cavil, till it is proved by some particular

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Inſtances, & neither needs, nor admits of any other Reply, than barely to challenge them to alledg any thing of moment in their own behalf about the particular matters there debated, that he has not ſufficiently repreſented: If in any thing conſiderable he has been diſingenuous, let them point it out; but if they cannot, let them not think to ſatisfie the World, by objecting what they confeſs they cannot prove, becauſe they do not. 'Tis true indeed, the ſpeeches of the Non-conformiſt are not ſo large and copious as his Adverſaries, becauſe his part conſiſts mainly in hinting Doubts and Objections, which muſt of neceſſity be in all forms of Arguing much ſhorter than their juſt and ſatisfactory Replies; eſpecially when they are not barely anſwered, but confuted too: And therefore conſidering the difference of the parts of the Dialogue, he has as clearly repreſented their ſenſe as his own; and if all he ſays for them were compoſed into one continued Speech, it would be no eaſie matter to diſcern it from one of their own Diſcourſes.

But the thing that really grieves them, is, that in this method he has ſtopt all their Subterfuges, as he proceeds, by preventing their ſhifting of Phraſes, and hiding themſelves in a maze of Words;

For, whereas 'tis their uſual Artifice to tire out the Wiſe, and amuſe the Simple, by rowling up and down in canting and ambiguous Expreſſions, he has been at the pains to ferret them from Phraſe to Phraſe, and never left his purſuit till they were left quite naked and defenceleſs, and without one crany whereby to make an eſcape: In ſo much, that they can never be able to return any tolerable Anſwers to one part of his Treatiſe, that are not already prevented in another.

But that which chiefly tempts leſs diſcerning People to ſuſpect ſome partiality, is, that the Diſcourſe of the Non-conformiſt looks all along ſo ſimply; though for that they ought to conſider, that 'tis no wonder if Non-ſenſe runs ſo lamely, when Truth and Reaſon tread ſo cloſe upon its heels; and the babble of a Fool never appears ſo fulſom, as when he diſcourſes with a Philoſopher; 'tis the ſmartneſs and perſpicuity of the Reply, that makes their folly ſo tranſparent: Remove the Conformiſt, and then the other talks at as wiſe a rate, as any of their own Writers.

But I beg the Readers pardon, for having ſo much tired his patience with ſatisfying the Cavils and Impertinences of theſe Peo-

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ple; when I am ſo well aſſured that they are uncapable either of being aſhamed or argued out of their Follies. 'Tis one thing to Baffle, and another to Convince them. And where they want ſtores of Reaſon to encounter an Adverſary, they never want Magazines of Reproaches: And therefore I ſhall only adviſe that excellent Perſon, the Author of the Debate, *to be careful how he lays aſide his Vizour; for if ever they diſcover him, let him look to be pelted to purpoſe with Slanders, and blaſting Reports: and though he be a Perſon of the Cleareſt and moſt unſpotted Innocence, that is no fence againſt the fouleſt Aſperſions; but if they ever find out the place of his Reſidence, let him aſſure himſelf, they will quickly find the next Dunghil to it, how clean ſoever he ſweeps his own Door.*

As for my own part I am hardned enough to be proof againſt the poiſon of Aſps, the Stings of Vipers, and the Tongues of——— *and reſt ſatisfyed in this, that they can never abuſe me more than they are pleaſed to abuſe themſelves; it being the moſt ſolemn ſtrain of their Devotion to viliſie themſelves with large Confeſſions of the hainouſeſt and moſt aggravated Sins: they will freely acknowledge their offences againſt all the Com-*

mandments, and that with the foulest and most enhancing Circumstances they can rake together, and confess their Injustice, Uncleanness, and Extortion, and all the Publican and Harlot Sins in the world: And in all their Confessions they stick not to charge themselves with such large Catalogues of Sin, and to amass together such an heap of Impieties, as would make up the compleatest Character of Lewdness and Villany. And if their Consciences do really Arraign them of all those Crimes, whereof they so familiarly endite themselves, there are no such guilty and unpardonable Wretches as they. So that their Confessions are either true, or false: if false, then they fool and trifle with the Almighty; if true, then I could easily tell them the fittest place to say their Prayers in. But however 'tis pity to abridge them the liberty all men have, to abuse themselves: but if they will extend this their Priviledge so far, as to attaint other mens Reputations, I shall only admonish them as a Friend before-hand, that there is somebody in the world that will not fail to requite their slanders, and false aspersions, with their own true Character. And so I take my leave of them, to address my self to those for whom this Discourse was intended. And though I

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dare not be ſo ſawcy as to teach my Superiours, how to Govern the Kingdom, out of Ezekiel, *or the* Revelations; *yet I will preſume to put up this ſingle Petition, in order to the ſecurity of our Publick Peace and Settlement.*

That whatſoever Freedom they may think good to Indulge to Religion, they would not ſuffer Irreligion to ſhare in the Favour, nor permit Atheiſm to appear openly (as it begins to do) under the Protection of Liberty of Conſcience. *I am not ſo utterly unacquainted with the Experience of former Ages, as to be over-apt to complain of the degeneracy of our own: the World I know has ever had its Viciſſitudes, and Periods of Vertue and Wickedneſs: and all Common-wealths have advanced themſelves to their Power and Grandeur by Sobriety and Wiſdom, and a tender Regard of Religion; and from thence have declined again by Softneſs and Effeminacy, by Sacrilege and Prophaneneſs, and a proud Contempt of God and his Worſhip. This is the Circle of Humane Affairs, and on theſe conſtant Turns depend the Periods and certain Fates of Empires. So that though Atheiſm reigns and prevails more in the preſent age, than in ſome that went imme-*

diately before it; yet there have been ſeaſons, when it was mounted up to a greater height of Power and Reputation, than 'tis yet advanced to: but then thoſe have always been black and fatal Times, and have certainly brought on Changes and Diſſolutions of States. For the Principles of Irreligion unjoynt the Sinews and blow up the very Foundations of Government: This turns all ſenſe of Loyalty into Folly; this ſets men at Liberty from all the effectual Obligations to Obedience, and makes Rebellion as vertuous, when ever it either is, or is thought as advantageous.

And therefore it imports Authority to nip this wanton humour in the Bud, and to cruſh it whilſt 'tis young and tender; for as yet it has found but ſlender entertainment with wiſe and ſober Perſons, and is only propagated among little and unlearned People: diſcreet men that have not more Religion, have yet at leaſt more wit and manners: The only Zelots in the Cauſe are the young Nurſlings, and ſmall Infantry of the Wits, the wild and hair-brain'd Youths of the Town. A ſort of Creatures that ſtudy nothing but Sloth and Idleneſs, that deſign nothing but Folly and Extravagance, that aſpire to no higher Accompliſhments than fine Phraſes,

ſes, terſe Oaths, and gay Plumes, that pretend to no other ſtock of Learning, but a few ſhavings of Wit gathered out of Plays and Comedies; and theſe they abuſe too, and labour to pervert their chaſte Expreſſions to Obſcene and Irreligious Purpoſes; and Johnſon *and* Fletcher *are prophaned, as well as the Holy Scriptures. They meaſure the Wit of their Diſcourſe by its Prophaneneſs and Ribaldry; and nothing ſets it off ſo handſomly as neat and faſhionable Oaths: and the only thing that makes them appear more Witty then other Folk, is their daring to be more wicked: Their Jeſts are remarkable for nothing but their Preſumption, and the picquancy of their Conceit lies in their Boldneſs. Men laugh not ſo much at the Wit, as the Sawcineſs of their Diſcourſe; and becauſe they dare vent ſuch things, as a diſcreet or civil man would ſcorn to ſay, though he were an Atheiſt. But theſe ſhallow fools are proud and ambitious to gain a Name and Reputation for Debauchery, they ſlander themſelves with falſe Impieties, and uſurp the Wickedneſs they were never guilty of, only to get a Renown in Villany.*

'Tis theſe Apes of Wit, and Pedants of Gentility that would make Atheiſm the

fashion forsooth, and Prophaneness the Character of a Gentleman; that think it a piece of Gallantry to scoff at Religion, droll upon God and make sport with his Laws; that account it an Argument of Judgment and Ingenuity, to be above the Follies of Conscience: and a height of Courage and Magnanimity, at all adventure to brave and defie Heaven, and out-dare the Almighty; and the noblest part of a gentile Behaviour, to counterfeit an Haughty and Supercilious Disdain of Religious Sneeks; and to beg all men that are respective to their Consciences, for soft and cowardly Fools, that are scared with Phantastick and Invisible Powers, and easily abused with Tricks, *and* Juglings, *and* Publick Tales. *Now certainly, these Phantastick Changelings must needs be wonderfully qualified, to judge of the most serious and most difficult Enquiries in the world. Are they not likely (think you) to search into the deepest Foundations of Religion, to weigh and examine all the Arguments for the Being of God, and Immortality of the Soul; to enquire into the Grounds of the Christian Faith, and to take an account of the Truth and Credibility of the Scriptures? And, when they have so utterly emasculated their*

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Underſtandings with Softneſs and Luxury, are not they prodigiouſly able to examine what Agrees or Quarrels with the Dictates of Pure and Impartial Reaſon? Are they not likely to determine what is truely Great and Generous, that never heard of any other Maxims of Philoſophy, but what they have pick'd up at Plays, out of the ſtiff Diſputes of Love and Honour? *And are they not likely to give a wonderful Account of the Record of Ancient Times (without which they are utterly unable to judg of the Truth or Falſhood of any Religion) that were never acquainted with any Hiſtory, unleſs perhaps that of the Follies, and Amours of the* French *Court? And yet how briskly do theſe giddy Youths determine theſe, and a thouſand other Difficult Theories, that they never had Learning or Patience enough to underſtand, much leſs to make an exact and ſatisfying ſearch into their Truth and Evidence?*

Alas young men! you are too raſh and forward, your confidence ſwells above your Underſtandings: 'Tis not for you to pretend to Atheiſm, 'tis too great a Priviledge for Boys and Novices. 'Tis ſawſineſs for you to be Prophane, and to cenſure Religion Impudence and ill Manners: and whatſoever Ra-

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tional Pleas Atheiſm may admit of, 'tis not for ſuch as you to pretend to Wit and Learning enough to underſtand them. And therefore take heed of expoſing your Vanity and Weakneſs; and, if you will not be Wiſe, yet at leaſt be Modeſt: Be adviſed, not to ſet up before your time, and better to furniſh your Underſtandings, before you vent your wit. Conſider, what a fulſome thing it is, that when the moſt Learned and Inquiſitive of the Philoſophers could never raiſe Atheiſm above the certainty of a Grand Perhaps: *and therefore denied not, but only doubted, the Truth of Religion: For none of them could ever be ſo utterly forſaken of his Reaſon, as to attempt to demonſtrate there could be no God; but only by ſhewing how, to ſolve the* Phænomena *of Nature and Providence without him, that poſſibly there might be none: and therefore they were never ſo abſurd, as to affront the worſhip of the Deity; but thought themſelves as effectually obliged in Prudence to the duties of Vertue and Religion by the poſſibility, as by the certainty of things. Now I ſay, when theſe men of Parts and Learning were ſo Modeſt and Diffident in their ſingular perſwaſions; what an unhandſome thing is it for ſuch empty Fops as you, with ſo bold and frontleſs a Confi-*

Confidence, to deſie the Almighty, to deride the wiſdom of his Laws, to cavil at his Sacred Oracles, and to give the Lye to the Univerſal Senſe of Mankind; and all this at all adventure?

And yet, methinks, 'tis pretty to hear one of theſe little Muſhrome Wits, Charge Religion with Credulity and eaſineſs of Belief; and talk confidently, that 'tis want of Judgment and Enquiry that betrays Fools and Ignorant People to be ſcared with the tales and threatnings of Ambitious Prieſts: *though it be ſo utterly impoſſible that any men ſhould be more chargeable with Credulity, than themſelves; and no mans Faith is capable of being more* implicit, *than their Unbelief; nor can the moſt illiterate Peaſant take up his Countries Religion upon more ſlender Grounds and Motives, than they do their Infidelity: their being equally Ignorant forces them to be equally Credulous. For, not to repeat any of the forementioned particulars, with what a greedy confidence do they ſwallow down the Principles of the* Malmsbury Philoſophy, *without any chewing, or conſideration? How huffingly will they aſſert, that the Notion of an Immaterial Subſtance implies a Contradiction, for no other reaſon, than becauſe it does? That*

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men have no Faculties but of Sense and Imagination; that Understanding is Reaction, and Reason a Train of Phantasmes; that the Will is a Corporeal Motion, that its determinations are Fatal and Mechanical, and necessitated by the Impressions of External and Irresistible Causes; that its Liberty of choice is as absurd and insignificant Nonsense, as a round Quadrangle; that Religion is the belief of Tales publickly allowed; that Power is Right, and justifies all Actions whatsoever, whether good or bad; that there is nothing just, or unjust in it self; that all Right and Wrong is the Result of Humane Contracts; and that the Laws of Nature are nothing but Maxims and Principles of self-interest! How boldly do they take up with these and other resembling Principles of Baseness and Irreligion, upon the bare Authority and proofless Assertions of one proud and haughty Philosopher? How much severe Study and Contemplation is required to a Competent Knowledge of these things? And yet with what a stiff and peremptory Confidence are they determined by these men, that cannot pretend to any other knowledge, (and 'tis a very candid presumption to allow them so much) than of the Laws of a Play, or Poem? In brief, these

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empty Spunges ſuck in Opinions, for their agreeableneſs with their debauched and licentious Practices, without ever conſidering their Truth and Evidence; for alas! they never troubled their heads with ſuch Enquiries: And therefore, whatever they pretend, 'tis not their Reaſons, but their Luſts and Vices, that cavil at the Principles of Religion; and they except againſt it, not becauſe it contradicts their underſtandings, (for that they never conſidered) but their Appetites: 'tis their Sins and ſenſual Inclinations, that prejudice and bar up their minds againſt it: and though they were convinced of its Truth, they would however be Infidels ſtill, in ſpight of all the Reaſon and Demonſtration in the world. Their Irreligion is an after-game of their Debauchery, they are forced to it in their own Defence. Their wickedneſs has made Infidelity their Intereſt, and Atheiſm their Refuge; and then they cannot, will not believe, for no other Reaſon, but only becauſe they dare not.

But that I may not purſue their Ignorance too unmercifully, I will venture, before I conclude, to commend their skill: For I cannot but acknowledge them guilty of one little piece of Art and Sophiſtry, viz. *That being Conſcious to themſelves, that no tole-*

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rable exceptions can be raiſed againſt the Principles of True Goodneſs, they affect to reproach it with forged and diſingenuous Aſperſions, and wittingly diſparage its native Beauty and Lovelineſs, by repreſenting it in falſe and uncouth Diſguiſes. For, whereas there is nothing more noble and generous, more cheerful and ſprightly, more courteous and affable, more free and ingenuous, more ſober and rational, than the Spirit and Genius of true Religion; theſe witty Gentlemen are pleaſed to paint it out in ſad and melancholy ſhapes, with poor and wretched Features, with ſoure and anxious Looks, as an enemy to all Mirth and Cheerfulneſs, and a thing that delights in nothing but Sighs, and Groans, and diſcoloured Faces: They dreſs it up in all the Follies and Deformities of Superſtition; and then, when they have made it ridiculous, they make themſelves ſport with it: And thus by repreſenting it as a humour unworthy the entertainment of a generous mind, that juſtifies their contempt of ſo weak a Paſſion, and makes a ſumptuous Apology for the gallantry of Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs. And indeed, if Religion were as mean and abſurd, as theſe men would make it, and others have made it, *let it not only excuſe but abet*

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their practices; let it be the mark of an high and gallant Spirit, to be an Atheist; let it be Gentility to despise, and Wit to droll upon Religion; let all Devotion be esteemed the Child of Folly and Weakness; let it be an Argument of Wisdom, to be prophane and vicious, and let Vertue become a name of the greatest Reproach and Infamy. But alas! when 'tis so demonstratively evident, that true Piety (though it were an Imposture) is our greatest wisdom and perfection; that it both adorns, and advances Humane Nature; that it is so highly advantageous to the peace and happiness of the World; that it carries in it all that is amiable and lovely, all that is cheerful and ingenuous, all that is useful and profitable; and that 'tis whatever can advance either our Content, or Interest, or Reputation: When all this is so amply evident; What can be more unpardonably base and disingenuous, than for these men, in spight of all Remonstrances, still to upbraid it with the Villanies of Hypocrisie, and blast its Credit with the Absurdities of Superstition, which is the greatest folly in the world, for no other reason, than because it debauches what is the greatest Wisdom? And there-

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fore they would do well to understand a little better what Religion means, before they take upon them to disgrace and defame it; and let them not discover their lamentable rawness and ignorance, by laughing at its folly and meanness, till they can first prove a base and selfish spirit to be more noble and generous, than an universal Love and Charity; Pride and Luxury to be more amiable than Sweetness and Ingenuity; Revenge and Impatience more honourable than Discretion and Civility; Excess and Debauchery more healthful than Temperance and Sobriety: to be enslaved to their Lusts and Passions more manly, than to live by the Rules of Reason and Prudence; Malice and Injustice to be more graceful and becoming a gentile Behaviour, than Kindness and Benignity; and the horrors of an amazed Spirit to be fuller of Pleasure and Felicity, than that Peace and Calmness of Mind that springs from the Reflections of an exact Conscience. Till all this, and much more is made good, that is, till all the Maxims of Folly and Wisdom are changed, let them be Civil, and Modest, and not scorn too confidently. And though all this could be done, yet, as for their parts they will be so

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ſar from ever performing it, that they will never be at the pains of attempting it; and if they ſhould, 'tis (God knows) too great a work for their little underſtandings. And therefore I appeal to all the wiſe and ſober world, Whether they that would make Religion ridiculous, are not infinitely ſo themſelves? Whether to conſute it with Raillery and Bold Jeſts, be not as void of Wit as Reaſon? And whether all the Folly and Madneſs in the World can equal this of theſe ſcoffing Atheiſts?

And thus having ſcourged their Ignorance and Preſumption with ſeverity enough, I ſhall forbear either to expoſe them for their Pedantry, or to laſh them for their rudeneſs and ill manners: though what can be more pedantick, than to be ſo big with every little Conceit, as to be in labour to vent it in every Company? And a pert School-boy is ſcarce more troubleſome with a petty Criticiſm againſt Mr. Lilly, *than theſe truantly Youths are with any ſingular Exception, that they have picked up againſt the Holy Scriptures. They cannot meet with a perſon of any Reputation for Learning, but they muſt be pecking at him with their Objections; and if he ſlight their impertinent Pratings (as all diſcreet*

men do) then the next time they meet their Dear Hearts, *with what* triumphant ſhrugs *do they boaſt their ſucceſs againſt the man in Black, and ſo laugh and drink themſelves into Confidence and Folly! And then, as for their want of manners, what deportment can be more courſe and clowniſh than to affect to be offenſive to all diſcreet men, and to delight to loath and nauſeate all Civil Company with the filthineſs of their Diſcourſe? A behaviour more irkeſom to a Gentleman of any Breeding and Civility, than the Buffoonry of Hoſtlers and Porters. They can ſcarce meet with a Clergy-man, but they muſt be pelting him with Oaths, or Ribaldry, or Atheiſtical Drollery*; i. e. *they ſtudy to annoy him with ſuch Diſcourſe, as he is obliged (though he were inwardly as great a Villain as themſelves) to deteſt by his Place and Profeſſion: a piece of Breeding much like his, that would have refuſed to entertain a Veſtal with any other Diſcourſe, than by deſcribing the Rites of* Priapus, *or the laſcivious Arts of* Cleopatra.

And ſo I leave them to the Correction of the Publick Rods: and 'tis high time that Authority check, and chaſtiſe the Wantonneſs of this Boyiſh humour. For the Infection ſpreads and grows faſhionable, and

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creeps out of Cities into Villages. To Impeach Religion is become the first exercise of Wit, in which young Gentlemen are to be Disciplined; and Atheism is the only knowledge and accomplishment they gain by a gentile Education; and they have nothing to make them fancy themselves more witty and refined People, than illiterate Peasants and Mechanicks, but a readiness and pregnancy to rally upon Religion: and he is a raw Youth, and smells rank of his Grandame *and his* Catechism, *that cannot resolve all the Articles of his Faith into the Cheats and Impostures of Priests. And thus they live here till they have sinned, or fooled away all sense of Honour and Conscience; and so return home useless, and unserviceable to their Countrey; and if they turn Sots, they may prove less dangerous: but if not, they are prepared for any designs of Mischief and Publick Disturbance. For at the same time they shake hands with Religion, they bid adieu to Loyalty; in that whilst they own no tyes of Conscience, they know no honesty but advantage; and Interest is the only endearment of their Duty to their Prince: and therefore, when-ever this happens to run counter to their Loyalty, 'tis then the strongest and most effectual in-*

ducement to any attempts of Treaſon, and Rebellion. And thus they may prove good Subjects, as Rogues and Out-laws are, who will be honeſt when 'tis their Intereſt; but when 'tis not, then any thing is their Duty, that contributes to their Security. And with theſe men in all Civil Wars and Diſſentions of State, the ſtrongeſt ſide has always the juſteſt Cauſe; and if Rebels prove ſucceſsful againſt their Lawful Prince, they gain their Aſſiſtance. And to theſe Principles we muſt aſcribe the unhappy ſucceſs of the late Rebellion: the ſilly and well meaning Zealots were only abuſed by ſly and crafty Incendiaries for the compaſſing of their own ambitious ends, and by their Councils only was the Cauſe managed, advanced, and finiſhed; till they raiſed their own Fortunes upon the Ruines of the Royal Intereſt, and eſtabliſh'd themſelves in the Royal Power and Dignity. And though the men and their Deſigns are periſhed, yet their Principles thrive and propagate; and 'tis ſtrange, yet eaſie to obſerve, how the contempt of Religion works men into a diſlike of Monarchy; and I ſcarce ever met with any zealous Common-wealths-man, whom I could not eaſily diſcover to have more of the Atheiſt than the Politician; in brief, all men of this

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Perſwaſion are ſo far from being inclined to love their Prince, that they are engaged by their very Principles to hate the Uſurper: For, take away the Divine Inſtitution of Government, and the Obligations of Conſcience to Obedience, and then all Government is Uſurpation, and all ſenſe of Obedience Folly: and Princes have no other Right to their Crowns, but what is founded upon Force and Violence; their Empire was firſt gain'd by Wars, Butcheries, and Maſſacres; their Diadems hang upon their Swords; and their Thrones ſtand deep in Humane Blood; and all Kingdoms are nothing but Societies of Slaves and Tyrants; and if any Subject can ſet himſelf free from his Sovereigns Oppreſſion, he is the braver man; and when he can win his Crown, he deſerves to wear it. And there is no man that laughs at the Folly of Religion, who is not angry at the Superſtition of Government. And therefore I leave it to Authority to conſider, how much it concerns them to reſtrain the Inſolence of this wanton Humour; and to puniſh thoſe, who make it their buſineſs to propagate Irreligious Principles, as the worſt and moſt dangerous Enemies to the State.

But my Scorn and Indignation againſt the preſumptuous laviſhneſs of theſe redoubt-

ed Wight ſwells this Preface to too large and tedious a length; and therefore, I ſhall only crave leave to premiſe this one caution for the advantage of the enſuing Treatiſe, and ſo have done; viz. *That in the management of this Debate, I have been careful to confine my diſcourſe to the weightieſt and moſt material Conſiderations, and have induſtriouſly waved all matters of an inferiour and ſubordinate Importance. For to what purpoſe is it to examine every little Exception, and every gay and plauſible Appearance; when the Enquiry is ſo clearly determinable, by Arguments of the greateſt Evidence and Concernment? And therefore I have only repreſented the inconſiſtency of* Liberty of Conſcience, *with the firſt and Fundamental Laws of Government. In which if I have ſpoken Reaſon, I have, without any more ado, carried the cauſe; if I have not, I am content to loſe my labour. For there are no Conſiderations of equal Evidence and Importance with thoſe that relate to the Peace and Settlement of Societies: So that, if thoſe I have urged prove ineffectual, all others, drawn from leſs conſiderable Topicks, would have been impertinent; and ſo far from ſtrengthning my diſcourſe, that they would rather have abated of its demonſtrative*

ſtrative Truth and Evidence: for being in their own natures not capable of ſuch enforcing and convictive Proofs, to mix them with clearer and more certain Reaſonings, were only to allay their ſtrength, and dilute their perſpicuity.

And for this Reaſon have I purpoſely omitted the Examination of that Argument, that ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſes the warm and buſie brains of ſome undertaking men, viz. *that* Liberty of Conſcience would be mightily conducive to the advancement of Trade. *For whether it be ſo, or ſo, it matters not, after it is proved to be apparently deſtructive of the Peace of Kingdoms. And though perhaps it might be no difficult task to prove the vanity of their Conceit, yet, after this performance, it would be at leaſt a trifling and frivolous undertaking; becauſe no man can be ſo utterly forſaken of all Reaſon and Diſcretion, as to think of promoting Traffick by any ways that are deſtructive of the Ends and Intereſt of Government. And therefore, if I have ſufficiently proved, that Liberty of Conſcience is ſo; 'tis but an idle ſpeculation after that to enquire, what ſervice it would do to the advancement of Trade: becauſe 'tis already proved inconſiſtent with a greater Good, than all the ad-*

vantages of Commerce can amount to. So that granting these Projecting People all they can demand, and supposing their Design as serviceable to the benefits of Trade, as they pretend; yet, what can be more shamefully imprudent, than to put the Kingdom upon so great an hazard for so small an advantage? Certainly Publick Peace and Settlement (that is the first and Fundamental end of all Societies) is to be valued above any advantages of Wealth and Trading: and therefore, if Liberty of Conscience as naturally tends to the disturbance of Government, as it can to the advancement of Trade (if any thing may be supposed to contribute to the Wealth of a Nation that tends to the dissolution of its Peace); so vast a mischief must infinitely outweigh this, and a thousand other lesser advantages: For there is nothing in the world of value enough to balance against Peace, but Peace it self.

And therefore I confess I cannot but smile when I observe how some, that would be thought wonderfully grave and solemn Statesmen, labour with mighty Projects of setting up this and that Manufacture, in their several respective Towns and Corporations; and how eagerly they pursue these petty Attempts beyond the great Affairs of a more Publick

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and Universal Concernment; and how wisely they neglect the Settlement of a whole Nation, for the benefit of a Village or Burrough. If indeed the Affairs of the Kingdom were in a fix'd and establish'd condition, these Attempts might then have been seasonable; and the enriching of particular places would be an Accession to the Wealth and Power of the whole Kingdom. But whilst we are distracted among our selves, with such a strange variety of Jealousies and Animosities; whilst the Publick Peace and Settlement is so unluckily defeated by Quarrels and Mutinies of Religion; and whilst the Consciences of men are acted by such peevish and ungovernable Principles; to erect and encourage Trading Combinations, is only to build so many nests of Faction and Sedition, and to enable these giddy and humoursom People to create publick Disturbances. For 'tis notorious, that there is not any sort of People so inclinable to Seditious Practices as the Trading part of a Nation; and their Pride and Arrogance naturally increases with the improvement of their stock. And, if we reflect upon our late miserable Distractions, 'tis easie to observe, how the Quarrel was chiefly hatch'd in the Shops of Tradesmen, and cherish'd by the Zeal of Prentice-boys, and City-gossips. And hence it is, that the Fanatick Party appears so vastly numerous and

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conſiderable, above and beyond their real number, partly becauſe theſe bold and giddy People live in greater Societies of men, and ſo are more obſervable; whereas in Country Towns and Villages their account is inconſiderable, and ariſes not (to ſpeak within compaſs) above the proportion of one to twenty; and partly becauſe in thoſe places where theſe Vermine naturally breed and ſwarm, they are always moſt talkative, and clamorous, and full of Buzze: and therefore, though their party be much the leaſt, and the meaneſt Intereſt; yet whilſt their number is conjectured by their noiſe, they make a greater Appearance, than twice as many ſober and peaceable men. Riots and Tumults are much more remarkable, than Societies of quiet and compoſed People; and a rout of unlucky Boys and Girls raiſe a greater noiſe (eſpecially when they wrangle among themſelves) than all the Pariſh beſide. But whether they are more or leſs conſiderable, 'tis a very odd and prepoſterous piece of Policy, to deſign the inriching of this ſort of People, whilſt their heads are diſtemper'd with Religious Lunacies: for it only puts weapons into the hands of Madmen, wherewith they may aſſault their Governours. Their Fundamental Principles incline them to perverſe and reſtleſs Diſpoſitions, that never are, nor will be, ſatisfied with any eſtabliſh'd frame of things: And if the Affairs of Reli-

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gion are not exactly model'd to their own nice and peremptory Conceptions, that is ground enough to overturn the present Settlement, and to new model the Church by a more thorow Reformation. Now whilst men are under the power of this proud and peevish humour, wealth does but only pamper and encourage their Presumption, and tempt them to a greater boldness and insolence against Authority. And if their Seditious Preachers do but blow the Trumpet to Reformation (i. e. to have every thing alter'd they dislike) how easily may they fire these heady people into tumults and outrages? How eagerly will they flow into their Party in spight of all the Power and Opposition of their Governours? And how prodigally will they empty their Bags, and bring in even their Bodkins and Thimbles, and Spoons to carry on the Cause? He is a very silly man, and understands nothing of the Follies, Passions, and Inclinations of Humane Nature, who sees not that there is no Creature so ungovernable, as a Wealthy Fanatick.

And therefore let not men flatter themselves with idle hopes of Settlement, any other way, than by suppressing all these dissentions, and reducing the minds of men to an Agreement and Unity in Religious Worship. For it is just as impossible to keep different Factions of Religion quiet and peaceable,

able, as it is to make the common people wiſe men and Philoſophers. If indeed we could ſuppoſe them ſober and diſcreet, it were then no great danger to leave them to their Liberty; but upon the ſame ſuppoſition we may as well let them looſe from all the Laws of Government and Policy: becauſe if every private man had wit & honeſty enough to govern himſelf and his own Actions, there would be no need of Publick Laws and Governours. And yet upon this impoſſible Preſumption ſtand all the Pretenſes for Liberty of Conſcience, That, if men were permitted it, they would uſe it wiſely and peaceably; *than which 'tis hard to ſuppoſe a greater Impoſſibility. For the Conſcience of the multitude is the ſame thing with their Wiſdom and Diſcretion: and therefore, 'tis as natural for them to fall into the ſnare of an abuſed and vicious Conſcience, as 'tis to be raſh & fooliſh: For an erroneous Conſcience is but one ſort of Folly, that relates to the Judgment of their moral Actions; in which they are as ignorant, and as likely to miſtake as in any other Affairs of Humane Life. There is no Obſervation in the world eſtabliſh'd upon a more certain and univerſal Experience, than that the generality of mankind are not ſo obnoxious to any ſort of Follies and Vices, as to wild and unreaſonable conceits of Religion; and that, when their heads are poſſeſs'd with them,*

them, there are no principles ſo pregnant with miſchief and diſturbance as they. And if Princes would but conſider, how liable mankind are to abuſe themſelves with ſerious and conſcientious Villanies, they would quickly ſee it to be abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of their Kingdoms, that there be ſet up a more ſevere Government over mens Conſciences and Religious perſwaſions, than over their Vices and Immoralities. For, of all Villains the well-meaning Zealot is the moſt dangerous: Such men have no checks of Conſcience, nor fears of miſcarriage to damp their Induſtry, but their Godlineſs makes them bold and furious; and, however their Attempts ſucceed, they are ſure of the Rewards of Saints and Martyrs. And what ſo glorious as to loſe their lives in the Cauſe of God? Theſe men are ever prepared for any miſchief, if they have but a few active and crafty Knaves to manage and ſet them on: (and there is never want of ſuch in any Common-wealth.) And there needs no other motive to engage their Zeal in any Seditious Attempt, than to inſtil into their minds the Neceſſity of a thorow Reformation; and then you may carry them whereſoever you pleaſe, and they will never boggle at any Miſchief, Out-rage, or Rebellion to advance the Cauſe. And therefore, it concerns the Civil Magiſtrate to beware of this ſort of People above all others, as a par-

ty,

ty, that is always ready formed for any Publick Disturbance. One would think, the world were not now to be taught, that there is nothing so difficult to be managed as Godly Zeal, or to be appeased as Religious Dissentions: People ever did, and ever will pursue such Quarrels with their utmost rage and fury; and therefore let us be content to govern the world as it ever has been, and ever must be govern'd; and not be so fond as to trouble our heads with contriving ways of Settling a Nation, whilst 'tis unsettled by Religion. Agreement in this is the first, if not the only foundation of Peace: and therefore, let that be first established upon firm and lasting Principles; (which it easily may by severe Laws faithfully executed, but otherwise never can.) But till it is done, 'tis just as wise and safe for a Prince to enrich his Subjects with Trade and Commerce, as 'tis to load weak and unfinished Foundations with great and weighty Superstructures. To conclude, all Arguments are to be considered in their proper place, and order: and 'tis but an unskilful, and inartificial way of discoursing, to argue from less weighty and considerable matters against the first and Fundamental reasons of things; and yet of this preposterous Method are those men guilty, who talk of the Interests of Trade in opposition to the Interests of Government: And therefore for a fuller An-

swer

ſwer to this, and all other the like pretenſes, I ſhall now refer the Reader to my Book; where I think I have proved enough to ſatisfie any man of an ordinary underſtanding, That Indulgence and Toleration is the moſt abſolute ſort of Anarchy, and that Princes may with leſs hazard give Liberty to mens Vices and Debaucheries, than to their Conſciences. As for my Method, 'tis plain and familiar, and ſuited to every man's Capacity; I have reduced the ſtate of the Controverſie to a few eaſie and obvious Propoſitions; under theſe I have couch'd all the particular matters concern'd in our preſent Debates, and by Analogy to their Reaſonableneſs have cleared off all Difficulties and Objections; and have been careful all along to prove the abſolute Neceſſity of what I aſſert from the moſt important ends and deſigns of Government, compared with the Natural Paſſions and Inclinations of Mankind. And whoever offers to talk of theſe Affairs without ſpecial regard both to the Nature of Government, and to the Nature of Man, may amuſe himſelf with the fine Dreams and Hypotheſes of a warm brain; but ſhall be certain to miſs the neceſſary Rules of Life, and the moſt uſeful meaſures of practicable Policy; that are ſuited only to the Humours and Paſſions of men, and deſigned only to prevent their Follies, and bridle their Enormities. And therefore the

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main Notion I have purſued has been to make out, how dangerous a thing Liberty of Conſcience is, conſidering the Tempers, and Tendencies of Humane Nature, to the moſt neceſſary ends and deſigns of Government: A vein of which Reaſoning I have been careful to run through all parts and Branches of my Diſcourſe, it being vaſtly the moſt conſiderable, if not the only thing to be attended to in this Enquiry. And as I have kept cloſe to my main Queſtion, ſo have I cautiouſly avoided all other collateral and unneceſſary Diſputes; and have not confined my ſelf to any Hypotheſis, nor determined any Controverſie, in which it was not immediately concern'd; but have expreſſed my Reaſonings in ſo general terms, as that they might be equally forcible upon the minds of all men, of howſoever different Perſwaſions in all other matters.

And now I have no other Favour, or Civility, to requeſt of the Reader, than that he would ſuſpend his Judgment, till he have ſeriouſly peruſed, and weighed all parts of the following Treatiſe: But, if he ſhall paſs Sentence upon any part, before he has conſidered the whole, he will in all probability put himſelf to the pains of raiſing thoſe Objections, I have already anſwered to his hand; and perhaps the next thing he condemns may be his own Raſhneſs.

CHAP.

Chap. I.

A more General Account of the Neceſsity of an Eccleſiaſtical Power, or Sovereignty over Conſcience in matters of Religion.

The Contents.

The Competition between the Power of Princes, and the Conſciences of Subjects, repreſented. The miſchiefs that unavoidably follow upon the Exemption of Conſcience from the Juriſdiction of the Supreme Power. The abſolute neceſſity of its being ſubject in affairs of Religion to the Governours of the Common-wealth. This proved at large, becauſe Religion has the ſtrongeſt influence upon the Peace of Kingdoms, and the

Intereſts of Government. Religion is ſo far from being exempted from the Reſtraints of Laws and Penalties, that nothing more requires them. 'Tis more eaſie to govern mens Vices than their Conſciences, becauſe all men are bold and confident in their Perſwaſions. The remiſs Government of Conſcience has ever been the moſt fatal miſcarriage in all Common-wealths. Impunity of Offenders againſt Eccleſiaſtical Laws, the worſt ſort of Toleration. The Miſchiefs that enſue upon the permitting men the Liberty of their Conſciences are endleſs. Fanaticiſm a boundleſs Folly. Affairs of Religion as they muſt be ſubject to the Supreme Civil Power, ſo to none other. The Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdictions iſſue from the ſame Neceſſity of Nature, and are founded upon the ſame Reaſon of things. A brief account of the Original of Civil Power. The Original of Eccleſiaſtical Power the ſame. In the firſt Ages of the World, the Kingly Power and Prieſtly Function were always veſted in the ſame perſons, and why. When they were ſeparated in the Jewiſh State, the Supremacy was annexed to the Civil Power.

And

And ſo continued until, and after our Saviours Birth. No need of his giving Princes any new Commiſſion to exerciſe that power, that was antecedently veſted in them by ſo unqueſtionable a Right. And therefore the Scripture rather ſuppoſes than aſſerts it. The argument againſt penal Laws in Religion from the practice of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, anſwered and confuted. The Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction of Princes not derived from any grant of our Saviours, but from the natural and antecedent Rights of all Sovereign Power. Chriſt and his Apoſtles could not uſe any coercive Juriſdiction, becauſe they acted in the capacity of Subjects. Their threatnings of Eternity carry in them as much compulſion upon Conſcience, as ſecular puniſhments. The power of the Church purely ſpiritual. In the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church God ſupplied its want of Civil Juriſdiction by immediate and miraculous Inflictions from Heaven. Diſeaſes of the Body the uſual conſequences of Excommunication. And this had the ſame effect as temporal Puniſhments. All this largely proved out of the writings of St. Paul. *When the*

Emperors became Christian, the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction was reannext to the Civil Power. And so continued till the Usurpation of the Bishops of Rome. *How since the Reformation the Ecclesiastical Power of Princes has been invaded by some pragmatical Divines. Their Confidence has scared Princes out of their Natural Rights. Of the clause of Exception annexed to the* Jejunium Cecilianum. *How the Puritans used it to countenance all their unruly and seditious Practices. A Conclusion drawn from all the Premisses for the absolute Necessity of the Ecclesiastical Power of Princes.*

§ 1. NOtwithstanding that Conscience is the best, if not the only security of Government, yet has Government never been controul'd or disturb'd so much by any thing as Conscience. This has ever rival'd Princes in their Supremacy, and pretends to as uncontroulable an Authority over all the Actions and Affairs of humane life, as the most absolute and unlimited Power durst ever challenge. Are Governours

vernours Gods Vicegerents? ſo is this. Have they a power of deciding all Controverſies? ſo has this. Can they preſcribe Rules of Virtue and Goodneſs to their Subjects? ſo may this. Can they puniſh all their Criminal Actions? ſo can this. And are they ſubject and accountable to God alone? ſo is this, that owns no ſuperiour but the Lord of Conſciences. And of the two Conſcience ſeems to be the greater Sovereign, and to govern the larger Empire. For whereas the Power of Princes is reſtrain'd to the outward actions of men, this extends its Dominion to their inward thoughts: Its throne is ſeated in their minds, and it exerciſes all that Authority over their ſecret and hidden ſentiments, that Princes claim over their publick and viſible practices. And upon this account is it ſet up upon all occaſions to grapple with the Scepters and Swords of Princes, and countermand any Laws, they think good to preſcribe; and whenever Subjects have a mind to controul or diſobey their Decrees, this is immediately preſt and engaged to their Party, and does not only dictate, but vouches all their Re-

monſtrances. Do Subjects rebel againſt their Sovereign? 'tis Conſcience that takes up Arms. Do they murder Kings? 'tis under the conduct of Conſcience. Do they ſeparate from the Communion of the Church? 'tis Conſcience that is the Schiſmatick. Do they tye themſelves by one Oath to contradict and evacuate another? 'tis Conſcience that impoſes it. Every thing any man has a mind to, is his Conſcience; and Murther, Treaſon, and Rebellion plead its Authority. The Annals and Hiſtories of all times and places are too ſad a Witneſs, that this great and ſacred thing has ever been abuſed, either through the Folly of ſome, or Hypocriſie of others, to patronize the moſt deſperate Miſchiefs, and Villanies, that were ever acted.

§ 2. Here then we ſee is a Competition between the Prerogative of the Prince, and that of Conſcience, *i. e.* every private mans own judgment and perſwaſion of things: The judgment of the Magiſtrate inclines him to Command, that of the Subject to Diſobey; and the Dictates of his Conſcience countermand the

the Decrees of his Prince. Now is there not likely to be untoward doings, when two Supreme Powers thus claſh and contradict each other? For what power would be left to Princes, if every private mans perſwaſion (for that is his Conſcience) may give check to their Commands? Moſt mens minds or Conſciences are weak, ſilly, and ignorant things, acted by fond and abſurd principles, and impoſed upon by their vices and their paſſions; ſo that were they entirely left to their own conduct, in what miſchiefs and confuſions muſt they involve all Societies? Let Authority command what it pleaſe, they would do what they liſt. And what is this but a ſtate of perfect Anarchy, in which every man does what is good in his own eyes? And therefore whilſt men contend for the Sovereign Empire of their Conſciences, and inveſt it with the Royal ſupremacy, by making it ſubject and accountable to none but God alone, they do in effect but uſurp their Prince's Crown, defie his Authority, and acknowledge no Governour but themſelves. For ſeeing that Conſcience is nothing but the judgment and opinion of their own Actions, if this be

exempt from the Commands of Governours, and if men not only may, but always ought to comply with their own Dictates, when they oppoſe their Decrees, 'tis eaſie to determine whether themſelves or their Governors be veſted with the Supreme Authority. In brief, every ſingle perſon is ſubject to two Supreme Powers, the Laws of his Prince, and the Dictates of his Conſcience, *i. e.* to his own and his Princes Opinion: and therefore if the Supreme Power of the Prince muſt give place to that of his Conſcience, it ceaſes upon that ſcore to be Supreme; becauſe there is a Superior Authority that can countermand all its Laws and Conſtitutions. What then is to be done in this caſe? Who ſhall arbitrate between theſe two mighty rival Powers, and ſo juſtly aſſign the true bounds of their reſpective Dominions; that Princes may never intrench upon the rights of Conſcience, nor Conſcience lay waſte the rights of Princes, but both may act within their proper ſpheres without invading each others Territories? For whenever their Powers happen to interfere, the quarrel quickly proceeds to all the miſchiefs and confuſions of War.

For

For there is not any thing ſo tender, or ſo unruly as Conſcience: if Authority curb it too ſeverely, it grows wild and furious, and impatient of all reſtraints; if it permit it an unbridled liberty, it ſoon runs it ſelf into all the miſchiefs and enormities in the world. And therefore it muſt be managed with equal tenderneſs and ſeverity: and as it muſt be guided by wiſe and ſober Laws, elſe it grows giddy and exorbitant; ſo muſt it not be provoked to reſiſtance by Tyranny and Oppreſſion: for if it once put the Sword into Subjects hands, it proves of all Rebels the moſt fatal and implacable, and is the beſt Commander of a Rebellious Army in the world. We ſee then that 'tis a matter of equal difficulty and importance to avoid all the miſchiefs and calamities that naturally follow upon the Contentions of theſe two Supreme Powers. 'Tis difficult to bring them to terms of Accommodation, becauſe neither of them will own any Superiour that may umpire their Controverſie; and yet that this ſhould be done is abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace, Settlement, and Tranquillity of all Common-wealths.

§ 3. And

§ 3. And therefore 'tis the design of this Discourse by a fair and impartial Debate to compose all their Differences, adjust all their quarrels and contentions, and settle things upon their true and proper foundations. Which I think may be effectually enough perform'd by these two considerations.

1. By proving it to be absolutely necessary to the Peace and Government of the World, that the Supreme Magistrate of every Common-wealth should be vested with a Power to govern and conduct the Consciences of Subjects in Affairs of Religion.

2. By shewing this to be so certain and undoubted a truth, that it is and must be acknowledged by its fiercest Adversaries; and that those who would deprive the supreme Civil Power of its Authority in reference to the Conduct of the worship of God, are forced to allow it in other more material parts of Religion; though they are both liable to the same inconveniences and objections. And this will oblige me to state the true extent of the Magistrates power over Conscience in reference to Divine Wor-

ship,

ſhip, by ſhewing it to be the very ſame with his Power over Conſcience in matters of Morality, and all other Affairs of Religion. Under one of which two Conſiderations I ſhall have occaſion to ſtate the moſt material Queſtions, and to anſwer the moſt conſiderable Objections, that occur in this Controverſie. And I do not queſtion but things may be made out with that demonſtrative evidence, and ſettled upon ſuch ſafe and moderate principles, as may abundantly ſatisfie every mans Conſcience, how nice and curious ſoever, provided it be not debauch'd with vice, and wicked principles; but if it be, then 'tis eaſie to make it appear both the Magiſtrates Duty and Intereſt to puniſh ſuch vicious and diſeaſed Conſcience as much as all other immorality.

§ 4. Firſt then 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Tranquillity of the Commonwealth, which, though it be the prime and moſt important end of Government, can never be ſufficiently ſecured, unleſs Religion be ſubject to the Authority of the Supreme Power, in that it has the ſtrongeſt influence upon humane

mane Affairs; and therefore if the Sovereign Power cannot order and manage it, it would be but a very incompetent Inſtrument of publick happineſs, would want the better half of it ſelf, and be utterly weak and ineffectual for the ends of Government. For 'tis certain, nothing more governs the minds of men than the apprehenſions of Religion: this leads or drives them any way. And as true Piety ſecures the publick weal by taming and civilizing the paſſions of men, and inuring them to a mild, gentle and governable ſpirit: So ſuperſtition and wrong notions of God and his Worſhip, are the moſt powerful engines to overturn its ſettlement. And therefore unleſs Princes have Power to bind their Subjects to that Religion that they apprehend moſt advantageous to publick Peace and Tranquillity, and reſtrain thoſe Religious miſtakes that tend to its ſubverſion; they are no better than Statues and Images of Authority, and want that part of their Power that is moſt neceſſary to a right diſcharge of their Government. For what if the minds of men happen to be tainted with ſuch furious and boyſterous Conceptions of Religion, as incline

cline them to ſtubborneſs and Sedition, and make them unmanageable to the Laws of Government; ſhall not a Prince be allowed to give check to ſuch unruly and dangerous Perſwaſions? If he may, then 'tis clear that he is endued with a power to conduct Religion, and that muſt be ſubject to his Dominion, as well as all other Affairs of State. But if he may not, then is he obliged in ſome caſes tamely to permit his Subjects to ruine and overturn the Common-wealth. For if their wild and capricious humours are not ſeverely bridled by the ſtricteſt Laws and Penalties, they ſoon grow headſtrong and unruly, become always troubleſome, and often fatal to Princes. The minds of the multitude are of a fierce and eager temper, apt to be driven without bounds and meaſures, whitherſoever their Perſwaſions hurry them: and when they have overheated their unſettled heads with religious rage and fury, they grow wild, talkative and ungovernable; and in their mad and raving fits of zeal break all the reſtraints of Government, and forget all the laws of order and ſobriety. Religion ſanctifies all their paſſions: anger, malice, and bitterneſs are holy fervors in the

the Cauſe of God. This cancels and diſpenſes with all the obligations of ſobriety: And what has prudence to do with Religion? this is too hot and eager to be tyed up to its flat and dull formalities. Zeal for the Glory of God will both excuſe and juſtifie any Enormity. There can be no Faction or Rebellion in carrying on the Intereſts of the Godly Party, and the great work of a thorough Reformation muſt not be truſted to the care of carnal and lukewarm Politicians. And by theſe and the like pretences do they eaſily deſtroy the reverence of all things Sacred and Civil, to propagate any wild Propoſitions; are arm'd with Religion, and led on by the Spirit of God to diſturb the Publick Peace, kill Kings, and overthrow Kingdoms. And this has ever been the bane and reproach of Religion in all times and places: and there is ſcarce a Nation in the world that has not felt the miſeries and confuſions of an Holy War: and the Annals of all Ages are full of ſad Stories to this purpoſe.

§ 5. And therefore to exempt Religion and the Conſciences of men from the Authority of the Supreme Power is but

but to expoſe the peace of Kingdoms to every wild and Fanatick Pretender, who may, when ever he pleaſes, under pretences of Reformation thwart and unſettle Government without controul; ſeeing no one can have any power to reſtrain the perſwaſions of his Conſcience. And Religion will be ſo far from being at liberty from the Authority of the Civil Power, that nothing in the world will be found to require more of its care and Influence, becauſe there is not any other Vice to which the vulgar ſort of men are more prone, than to Superſtition or debauched conceptions concerning God and his Worſhip, nor any that more inclines them to an unruly and ſeditious temper. It inflames their crazy heads with a Furious and Sectarian Zeal, and adopts their rankeſt and moſt untoward paſſions into the Duties of Religion. And when paſſion becomes Holy, then it can never be exorbitant; but the more furious and ungovernable it is, ſo much the more vehement is their zeal for the Glory of God; and they that are moſt peeviſh and refractory, are upon that account the moſt godly. And then all paſſion and ſtubbornneſs in Religious Quarrels

muſt be chriſtned Zeal, all Zeal muſt be ſacred, and nothing that is ſacred can be exceſſive. And now when men act furiouſly upon theſe miſtakes (as all that are poſſeſſed with them muſt) what can the iſſue be but eternal Miſeries and Confuſions? Every Opinion muſt make a Sect, and every Sect a Faction, and every Faction, when it is able, a War, and every War is the Cauſe of God, and the Cauſe of God can never be proſecuted with too much violence. And then all ſobriety is lukewarmneſs, to be obedient to Government carnal Complyance, and not to proceed to Rebellion for carrying on the great work of a thorough Reformation, is to want Zeal for the Glory of God. And thus are their Vices ſanctified by their Conſciences, malice, folly, and madneſs are ever the prevailing ingredients of their ſuperſtitious Zeal, and Religion only obliges them to be more ſturdy and impudent againſt the Laws of Government; and they are now encouraged to cheriſh thoſe paſſions in ſpight of Authority, from which the ſeverity of Laws might effectually have reſtrain'd them, were it not for the croſs obligations of an untoward Conſcience.

§ 6. And

§ 6. And for this reaſon is it, that 'tis found ſo nice and difficult a thing to govern men in their perſwaſions about Religion, beyond all the other affairs and tranſactions of humane life; becauſe erroneous Conſciences are bold and confident enough to outface Authority: whereas perſons of debauch'd and ſcandalous lives, being condemn'd by their own Conſciences as well as the publick Laws, can have nothing to bear them up againſt the will of their Superiors, and reſtraints of Government. But when mens minds are poſſeſt with ſuch unhappy Principles of Religion as are more deſtructive of the Peace and Order of civil Society than open lewdneſs and debauchery, and when the Vertues of the Godly are more pregnant with villany and miſchief than the Vices of the wicked, and when their Conſciences are ſatisfied in their miſchievous and ungovernable perſwaſions, and when they ſeriouſly believe that they approve themſelves to God by being refractory and irreclamable in their Fanatick Zeal, then how eaſie is it to defie Authority, and trample upon all

its threatnings and penalties? And thoſe Laws, that would awe a prophane and irreligious Perſon at leaſt into an outward compliance, ſhall but exaſperate a boiſterous Conſcience into a more vehement and ſeditious diſobedience. Now when 'tis ſo difficult for Magiſtrates either to remove theſe Religious Vices, or to bridle their unrulineſs, they muſt needs find it an incomparably harder task to reſtrain the extravagancies of Zeal, than of Lewdneſs and Debauchery. And therefore ſeeing the multitude is ſo inclinable to theſe miſtakes of Religion, and ſeeing, when they are infected with them, they grow ſo turbulent and unruly, I leave it to Governours themſelves to judge, whether it does not concern them with as much vigilance and ſeverity either to prevent their riſe or ſuppreſs their growth, as to puniſh any the fouleſt crimes of Immorality? And if they would but ſeriouſly conſider into what exorbitances peeviſh and untoward principles about Religion naturally improve themſelves, they could not but perceive it to be as much their concernment to puniſh them with the ſevereſt inflictions, as any whatſoever Principles of Rebellion in the State.

§ 7. And

§ 7. And this certainly has ever been one of the moſt fatal miſcarriages of all Governours, in that they have not been aware of this fierce and implacable enemy; but have gone about to govern unruly Conſciences by more eaſie and remiſs Laws, than thoſe that are only able to ſuppreſs ſcandalous and confeſſed villanies, and have thought them ſufficiently reſtrain'd by threatning puniſhments, without inflicting them. And indeed in moſt Kingdoms (ſo little have Princes underſtood their own Intereſts in reference to Religion) Eccleſiaſtical Laws have been ſet up only for Scar-crows, being eſtabliſhed rather for ſhew and Form ſake, than with any deſign of giving them life, by putting them into Execution; and if any were ſo hardy as not to be ſcared into obedience by the ſeverity of their threatnings, they have been emboldned to diſobedience by the remiſneſs of their execution, till they have not only plaid with the Law it ſelf as a ſenſleſs trifle, but have ſcorn'd the weakneſs of the Power that ſet it up. For there is nothing more certain in experience, than that Impunity gives not only war-

ranty but encouragement to Diſobedience; and by habituating men to controul the Edicts of Authority, teaches them by degrees to deſpiſe it. And this is the main reaſon why Eccleſiaſtical Laws have generally proved ſuch ineffectual inſtruments of Uniformity, becauſe they have either been weakned through want of execution, or in a manner cancell'd by the oppoſitions of Civil Conſtitutions. For when Laws are bound under ſevere penalties, and when the Perſons, who are to take cogniſance of the Crime, have not Power enough to puniſh it, or are perpetually check'd and controul'd by a ſtronger Power, no wonder if the Laws be affronted and deſpiſed; and if, inſtead of bringing mens minds to compliance and ſubjection, they exaſperate them into open contumacy. Reſtraint provokes their ſtubbornneſs, and yet redreſſes not the miſchief. And therefore it were better to grant an uncontroul'd Liberty by declaring for it, than, after having declared againſt it, to grant it by ſilence and impunity. The Prohibition diſobliges Diſſenters, and that is one evil; and the impunity allows them Toleration, and that is a greater: and

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where Governours permit, what their Laws forbid, there the Common-wealth muſt at once loſe all the advantages of reſtraint, and ſuffers all the inconveniences of Liberty. So that as they would expect Peace and Settlement, they muſt be ſure at firſt to bind on their Eccleſiaſtical Laws with the ſtreighteſt knot, and afterward to keep them in force and countenance by the ſevereſt Execution; in that wild and Fanatick Conſciences are too headſtrong to be curb'd with an ordinary ſeverity; & therefore their reſtraints muſt be proportion'd to their unrulineſs: and they muſt be managed with ſo much a greater care and ſtrictneſs, than all other principles of publick diſturbance, by how much they are more dangerous & unruly.

§ 8. For if Conſcience be ever able to break down the reſtraints of Government, and all men have Licence to follow their own perſwaſions, the miſchief is infinite, and the folly endleſs; and they ſeldom ceaſe to wander from folly to folly, till they have run themſelves into all the whimſies and enormities, that can debauch Religion, or annoy the publick Peace. The giddy Mul-

titude are of a reſtleſs and ſtragling humour; and yet withal ſo ignorant and injudicious, that there is nothing ſo ſtrange and uncouth, which they will not take up with Zeal and Confidence: Inſomuch that there never yet was any Commonwealth, that gave a real liberty to mens Imaginations, that was not ſuddenly over-run with numberleſs diviſions, and ſubdiviſions of Sects: as was notorious in the late Confuſions, when Liberty of Conſcience was laid as the Foundation of Settlement. How was Sect built upon Sect, and Church upon Church, till they were advanced to ſuch a height of Folly, that the Uſurpers themſelves could find no other way to work their ſubverſion, and put an end to their extravagancies, but by overturning their own Foundations, and checking their growth by Laws and Penalties? The humour of Fanaticiſing is a boundleſs folly, it knows no reſtraints; and if it be not kept down by the ſeverity of Governours, it grows and encreaſes without end, or limit, and never ceaſes to ſwell it ſelf, till it has broke down all the banks and reſtraints of Government. Thus when the Diſciplinarians had in

purſuit of their own peeviſh and unreaſonable Principles divided from the Church of *England*, others upon a farther improvement of the ſame principles ſubdivided from them; every new opinion was enough to found a new Church, and Sect was ſpawn'd out of Sect, till there were almoſt as many Churches as Families: For when they were once parted from the order & ſobriety of the Church they lived in, nothing could ſet bounds to their wild and violent Imaginations.

§ 9. Schiſmaticks always run themſelves into the ſame exceſs in the Church as Rebels and Seditious Perſons do in the State, who out of a hatred to Tyranny are reſtleſs till they have diſſolved the Common-wealth into Anarchy & Confuſion; and, becauſe ſome Kingly Governments have proved Tyrannical, will allow no free States but under Republicks. As was notorious in all the Apologies for the late Uſurpers, who took it for granted in general, That all Government under a ſingle Perſon was ſlaviſh and oppreſſive without reſpect to its particular Conſtitutions; and that the very name of a Common-wealth was a ſufficient

preſervation of the Peoples Liberties, notwithſtanding that thoſe who managed it were never ſo Imperious and Arbitrary in the exerciſe of their Power. And in the ſame manner our Church Diſſenters, out of abhorrency to the Papal Tyranny and Uſurpation upon mens underſtandings, never think the liberty of their Conſciences ſufficiently ſecured, till they have ſhaken off all ſubjection to Humane Authority: and becauſe the Church of *Rome* by her unreaſonable Impoſitions has invaded the Fundamental Liberties of mankind, they preſently conclude all reſtraints upon licentious Practices and Perſwaſions about Religion under the hated name of Popery. And ſome Theological Empericks have ſo poſſeſs'd the peoples heads with this fond conceit, that they will ſee no middle way between ſpiritual Tyranny, and ſpiritual Anarchy, and ſo brand all reſtraint of Government in Affairs of Religion as if it were Antichriſtian, and never think themſelves far enough from *Rome*, till they are wandred as far as *Munſter*. Whereas the Church of *England* in her firſt Reformation was not ſo wild as to aboliſh all Eccleſiaſtical Authority, but only

only removed it from thoſe who had unjuſtly uſurp'd it to its proper ſeat, and reſtrain'd it within its due bounds and limits: And becauſe the Church of *Rome* had clogg'd Chriſtianity with too many gariſh and burdenſome Ceremonies, they did not immediately ſtrip her naked of all modeſt and decent Ornaments out of an over-hot oppoſition to their too flanting Pomp and Vanity, but only cloathed her in ſuch a Dreſs, as became the Gravity and Sobriety of Religion. And this is the Wiſdom and Moderation of our Church to preſerve us ſober between two ſuch unreaſonable Extremes.

§ 10. But not to run too haſtily into particular diſputes, 'tis enough at preſent to have proved in general the abſolute neceſſity that Affairs of Religion ſhould be ſubject to Government; and then if they be exempt from the Juriſdiction of the Civil Power, I ſhall demand, Whether they are ſubject to any other Power, or to none at all? If the former, then the Supreme Power is not Supreme, but is ſubject to a Superiour in all matters of Religion, or rather (what is equally abſurd) there would be two Supreme Pow-

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ers in every Common-wealth; for if the Princes Juriſdiction be limited to Civil Affairs, and the concerns of Religion be ſubject to another Government, then may Subjects be obliged to (what is impoſſible) contradictory Commands: and at the ſame time the Civil Magiſtrate requires him to defend his Country againſt an Invaſion, the Eccleſiaſtical Governour may command him to abandon its defence, for the carrying on an Holy War in the Holy Land, in order to the recovery of our Saviour's Sepulchre from the Poſſeſſion of the Turks and Saracens. But ſeeing no man can be ſubject to contradictory obligations, 'tis by conſequence utterly impoſſible he ſhould be ſubject to two Supreme Powers.

If the latter, then the former Argument returns; and as to one half of the concerns of the Common-wealth there muſt be a perfect Anarchy, and no Government at all. And there is no Proviſion to be made againſt all thoſe publick miſchiefs and diſturbances that may ariſe from Errors and Enormities in Religion; the Common-wealth muſt for ever be expoſed to the follies of Enthuſiaſts, and villanies of Impoſtors; and

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any man, that can but pretend Conſcience, may whenever he pleaſes endeavour its Ruine: So that if Princes ſhould forego their ſovereignty over mens Conſciences in matters of Religion, they leave themſelves leſs Power than is abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace & Defence of the Common-wealths they govern. In brief, the Supreme Government of every Common-wealth, wherever it is lodged, muſt of neceſſity be univerſal, abſolute, and uncontroulable, in all Affairs whatſoever, that concern the Intereſts of mankind, and the ends of Government: For if it be limited, it may be controul'd: but 'tis a thick and palpable Contradiction to call ſuch a Power Supreme, in that whatever controuls it muſt as to that caſe be its Superiour. And therefore Affairs of Religion being ſo ſtrongly influential upon Affairs of State, and having ſo great a power either to advance or hinder the publick felicity of the Common-wealth, they muſt be as uncontroulably ſubject to the Supreme Power as all other Civil Concerns; becauſe otherwiſe it will not have Authority enough to ſecure the Publick Intereſt of the Society, to attain the neceſſary

ceſſary and moſt important ends of its Inſtitution.

§ 11. Now from theſe Premiſſes we may obſerve, That all Supreme Power, both in Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, iſſues from the ſame Original, and is founded upon the ſame Reaſon of things, namely the indiſpenſable neceſſity of Society to the preſervation of Humane Nature, and of Government to the preſervation of Humane Society: a Supreme Power being abſolutely neceſſary to the deciſion of all thoſe Quarrels and Controverſies, that are naturally conſequent upon the Paſſions, Appetites, and Follies of men, there being no other way of ending their Differences but by the Decrees of a final & unappealable Judicature. For if every man were to be his own Judge, mens Determinations would be as contradictory as their Judgments, & their Judgments as their Humours or Intereſts; and ſo muſt their Diſſentions of neceſſity be endleſs: And therefore to avoid theſe and all other Inconveniences that would naturally follow upon a ſtate of War, it was neceſſary there ſhould be one Supreme and Publick Judgment, to whoſe Deter-

Determinations the private Judgment of every ſingle perſon ſhould be obliged to ſubmit it ſelf. And hence the Wiſdom of Providence, knowing to what paſſions and irregularities mankind is obnoxious, never ſuffered them to live without the reſtraints of Government; but in the beginning of things ſo ordered affairs, that no man could be born into the world without being ſubject to ſome Superior: every father being by nature veſted with a right to govern his children. And the firſt governments in the world were eſtabliſhed purely upon the natural Rights of paternal Authority, which afterward grew up to a Kingly Power by the increaſe of poſterity; and he that was at firſt but Father of a Family, in proceſs of time, as that multiplied, became Father of a City, or Province: and hence it came to paſs that in the firſt Ages of the World, Monarchy was its only Government, neceſſarily ariſing out of the Conſtitution of humane Nature, it being ſo natural for Families to enlarge themſelves into Cities by uniting into a body according to their ſeveral Kindreds, whence by conſequence the Supreme Head of thoſe Families muſt become

become Prince and Governour of a larger & more diffuſed Society. And therefore *Cedrenus* makes *Adam* the firſt Monarch in the World, ἔτω ἡγεμόνευσι τῆς γῆς οἱ ἀνθρώπων οἱ ὅλης αὐτῆς ἐ ζωῆς. And thus afterwards in the diviſion of the Earth among the Poſterity of *Noah*, the heads of Families became Kings and Monarchs of the Nations of which they were Founders, from whence were propagated the ſeveral Kingdoms of the firſt and elder times; as appears not only from the *Moſaick* Hiſtory, but alſo from all other the beſt and moſt ancient Records of the firſt Ages of the World: But as for Common-wealths, they are comparatively of a very late diſcovery, being firſt contriv'd among the *Grecians*, whoſe Democracies and Optimacies were made out of the Ruines of Monarchick Government; which was but ſutable to the proud, factious, and capricious humour of that Nation, where ſcarce any one could pretend to a little skill in *Poetry or Wreſtling* (their two greateſt accompliſhments) but he muſt immediately be an *Undertaker* for new modelling the Common-wealth; which doubtleſs was one of the main cauſes of their perpe-

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tual Confuſions, and frequent Changes in Government.

§ 12. Having thus firmly founded all Civil Government upon *Paternal Authority*, I may now proceed to ſhew, That all Eccleſiaſtical Power bottoms upon the ſame Foundation: For as in the firſt Ages of the world, the Fathers of Families were veſted with a *Kingly Power* over their own Poſterity; ſo alſo were they with the *Prieſtly Office*, executing all the Holy Functions of Prieſthood in their own Perſons, as appears from the unanimous teſtimony of Hiſtories both Sacred and Prophane. Thus we find all the Ancient Patriarchs Prieſts to their own Families; which Office deſcended together with the Royal Dignity to the firſt-born of each Family. And this cuſtom of inveſting the *Sovereign Power* with the *Supreme Prieſthood*, was (as divers Authors both Ancient and Modern obſerve) univerſally practis'd over all Kingdoms of the world for well nigh 2500 years, without any one preſident to the contrary.

In that among all Societies of men there is as great a neceſſity of publick Worſhip, as of publick Juſtice; the Power

power whereof, becauſe it muſt be ſeated ſomewhere, can properly belong to him alone, in whom the Supreme Power reſides; in that he alone having authority to aſſign to every ſubject his proper function, and among others this of the Prieſthood; the exerciſe whereof as he has power to transfer to another, ſo may he, if he pleaſe, reſerve it to himſelf. And therefore this the wiſdom of the elder Ages always practiſed, in order to the better ſecurity of their Government; as well knowing the tendency of Superſtition, and falſe notions of the divine worſhip, to Tumults and Seditions; and therfore, to prevent the diſturbances that might ſpring from Factions in Religion, they were ſollicitous to keep its management in their own immediate diſpoſal. And though in the Jewiſh Commonwealth, the Prieſtly Office was upon reaſons peculiar to that State ſeparated by a divine poſitive command from the Kingly Power; yet the Power and Juriſdiction of the Prieſt remained ſtill ſubject to the Sovereign Prince, their King always exerciſing a Supremacy over all perſons, and in all Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical: Nothing can be more unqueſtionable than the precedents

cedents of *David*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah*, *Jehu*, *Jehoſaphat*, *Joſiah*, &c. who exerciſed as full a Legiſlative Power in Affairs of Religion, as in Affairs of State. They alone reſtrain'd and puniſh'd whatever tended to the ſubverſion of the Publick and eſtabliſh'd Religion; they ſuppreſs'd Innovations, reform'd Corruptions, ordered the Decencies and Solemnities of publick Worſhip, inſtituted new Laws and Ceremonies, and conducted all the concerns of Religion by their own Power and Authority. Now there is nothing that can be pretended againſt the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction of Chriſtian Magiſtrates, that might not with as great a ſhew of Reaſon have been urged againſt theſe Jewiſh Kings.

§ 13. And thus were the Affairs of Religion in all Nations govern'd by the Supreme Power till our bleſſed Saviour's birth, who came into the world to eſtabliſh new Laws of Religion, and not to ſet up any new Models of Politie. He came not to unſettle the Foundations of Government, or to diminiſh the natural Rights of Princes, and ſettle the conduct of humane affairs upon new Principles,

but left the Government of the world in the ſame condition he found it: All his Diſcourſes were directed to private perſons, and ſuch whoſe duty it was to Obey, and not Command; and therefore though we find him every where highly ſolicitous to preſs men to Obedience in general, (and perhaps it would be no eaſie task to find out any Profeſſors of the Art of Policy, either ancient or modern, that have carried the Doctrine of Obedience ſo high as the Sermons of our Saviour, and the Writings of his Apoſtles) yet no where he takes upon him to ſettle, much leſs to limit the Prerogatives of Princes; and therefore the Government of Religion, being veſted in them by an antecedent and natural Right, muſt without all controverſie belong to them, till it is derogated from them by ſome Superiour Authority: ſo that unleſs our Saviour had expreſly diſrobed the *Royal Power* of its Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, nothing elſe can alienate it from their *Prerogative*. And therefore 'tis no wonder if he left no Commands to the Civil Magiſtrate for the right Government of Religion; for to what purpoſe ſhould he give them a new Commiſſion

miſſion to exerciſe that Power, that was already ſo firmly eſtabliſh'd in the world by the unalterable dictates of Natural Reaſon, and Univerſal Practice, and Conſent of Nations: it being ſo clearly inſeparable from the Supreme Power in every Common-wealth, that it loſes both its Supremacy, and its uſefulneſs, unleſs it be univerſal and unlimited? In that the end of all Government is to ſecure the Peace and Tranquillity of the Publick; and therefore it muſt have Power to manage and order every thing that is ſerviceable to that end. So that it being ſo clearly evident from the experience of mankind, and from the nature of the thing it ſelf, that nothing has a ſtronger influence upon the publick Intereſts of a Nation, than the well or ill management of Religion; its conduct muſt needs be as certain and inſeparable a Right of the Supreme Power in every Common-wealth, as the Legiſlative Authority it ſelf; without which 'tis utterly impoſſible there ſhould be any Government at all. And therefore the Scripture ſeems rather to ſuppoſe than aſſert the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction of Princes. What elſe means that Promiſe, That Kings ſhall be

nurſing Fathers to the Church of God, unleſs by their Power they may cheriſh and defend the true Religion, and protect it from being deſtroyed by Hereticks and Seducers? What does the Scripture mean when it ſtyles our Saviour *King of Kings*, and makes Princes his Vicegerents here on earth? What means the Apoſtle, when he ſays, Kings are appointed to this end, *That under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, not only in all honeſty, but in all godlineſs too?* Where we ſee, that the propagation of Godlineſs is as much the Duty of Governours, as the preſervation of Juſtice; neither of which can a Prince (as ſuch) effectually promote, but by the proper effects of his Power, *Laws and Penalties.*

Beſides all which, all the Power of the Common-wealth our Saviour lived in, was fall'n into ſuch mens hands, that would be ſo far from concerning themſelves in the defence, protection, and propagation of Chriſtianity, that he knew they would exert the utmoſt of their force to ſuppreſs and deſtroy it. Now to what purpoſe ſhould he entruſt them with a Commiſſion to govern his Church, when he knew they would labour

bour its utter ruine and deſtruction? And hence was there no other peaceable method to propagate the Chriſtian Faith in the world, but by the patience and ſufferings of its Profeſſors: and therefore our Saviour, to ſecure his Religion from the reproach of being Factious and Seditious againſt the State, was ſollicitous above all things to arm them with Meekneſs and Patience; and to this purpoſe he gave them glorious promiſes to encourage their ſubmiſſion to their unhappy Fate, and ſevere Injunctions to ſecure their Obedience to all the Commands of lawful Superiours, except when they run directly croſs to the Intereſt of the Goſpel; which as the poſture of Affairs then ſtood, was incomparably the moſt effectual, as well as moſt innocent way of its propagation.

§ 14. And therefore 'tis but an idle and impertinent Plea that ſome men make for *Liberty of Conſcience*, when they would reſtrain the Magiſtrates Power ſo, as to make uſe of no other means than what our Saviour and his Apoſtles uſed to convince and convert men: An Argument that much reſembles that,

which they urge with ſo much popular noiſe and confidence againſt that little Grandeur & Authority that is left to the Governours of our Church; becauſe forſooth the Apoſtles, by reaſon of the unhappy juncture of Affairs in their times, lived in a mean and perſecuted condition; and therefore what was their Calamity, theſe men would make our Duty: but it were to be wiſhed they would purſue their Argument to all the purpoſes for which it may as rationally ſerve: and ſo they muſt ſell their Lands, and bring the money and lay it at the *Biſhops* Feet; they muſt paſs away all their Proprieties, and have *all things in common, and part them to all men as every man has need*, becauſe the Primitive Chriſtians did ſo. At ſo prodigious a rate of impertinency do men talk, when their Paſſions dictate their Diſcourſes; and to ſo fine a paſs would the Affairs of Chriſtendom be brought by this trifling pretence of reducing the ſtate of the Church to its Primitive Practice in all accidents and circumſtances of things.

But yet I ſuppoſe theſe men themſelves would ſcarce imitate the practice of our Saviour and his Apoſtles in this particular;

lar; for if the Scribes and Phariſees were now in being, I hope they would not allow them the liberty openly to blaſpheme the Name of *Jeſus*, and to perſecute all that would not believe him an Impoſtor; which though they did familiarly in his own time, yet he never went about to reſtrain their Blaſphemies by Laws and Puniſhments: and therefore I only demand, Whether the Civil Magiſtrate may make penal Laws againſt Swearing and Blaſphemy, and ſuch other Irreligious Debaucheries? If he may, why then they are matters that as directly and immediately relate to Religion, as any Rites and Ceremonies of Worſhip whatſoever; and for the Government of which they are as utterly to ſeek for any Precedent of our Saviour and his Apoſtles. Nay more, if this Argument were of any force, it would equally deprive the Magiſtrate of any Power to compel his Subjects to obedience to any of the moral Precepts of the Goſpel by ſecular Laws and Puniſhments; becauſe our Saviour and his Apoſtles never did it: eſpecially when all matters of Morality do as really belong to our ſpiritual concerns, as any thing that relates immediately to

Divine Worſhip, and Affairs of meer Religion; and therefore if the Civil Magiſtrate may not compel his Subjects to a right way of Worſhip with the Civil Sword, becauſe this is of a ſpiritual concernment (as is pretended:) upon the ſame ground, neither may he make uſe of the ſame force to compel men to Duties of Morality, becauſe they alſo equally relate to their ſpiritual Intereſts: Beſides, the Magiſtrates Authority in both is founded upon the ſame Principle, *viz.* The abſolute neceſſity of their due Management in order to the Peace and Preſervation of the Common-wealth. We derive not therefore his Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction from any grant of our Saviours, but from an antecedent right wherewith all Sovereign Power was indued before ever he was born into the world; foraſmuch as the ſame Providence, that intruſted Princes with the Government of Humane Affairs, muſt of neceſſity have veſted them in at leaſt as much Power, as was abſolutely neceſſary to the nature and ends of Government.

§ 15. But further yet, all the ways our Saviour has appointed in the Goſpel for

for the advancement and propagation of Religion, were preſcribed to Subjects, & not to Governours; and this indeed is certain, that no private perſon can have any power to compel men to any part of the Doctrine, Worſhip, or Diſcipline of the Goſpel; for if he had, he would upon that very account ceaſe to be a Private perſon, and be veſted with a Civil Power. But that no Magiſtrate may do this, will remain to be proved, till they can produce ſome expreſs prohibition of our Saviour to reſtrain him: and till that be done, 'tis but a ſtrange rate of arguing, when they would prove that Magiſtrates may not uſe any *coercive Power* to promote the Intereſts of Religion, becauſe this is forbidden to their Subjects; eſpecially when 'tis to be conſidered, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles acted themſelves in the capacity of Subjects to the Common-wealth they lived in, and ſo could neither uſe themſelves, nor impart to others any coercive Power for the advancement, and propagation of their Doctrine; but were confined to ſuch prudent and peaceable Methods, as were lawful for perſons in their condition to make uſe of, *i. e.* humble Intreaties, and

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Perſwaſions. Our Saviour never took any part of the Civil Power upon himſelf, and upon that ſcore could not make penal and coercive Laws; the power of Coertion being ſo certainly inſeparable from the Supreme Civil Power: But though he back'd not his Commandments with temporal puniſhments, becauſe his Kingdom was not of this world; yet he enforced them with the threatnings of Eternity, which carry with them more compulſion upon mens Conſciences than any Civil Sanctions can: For the only reaſon why Puniſhments are annex'd to Laws, is becauſe they are ſtrong Motives to Obedience; and therefore when our Savour tied his Laws upon mankind under *Eternal Penalties*, he uſed as much force to drive us to obedience, as if he had abetted them with *temporal Inflictions*: So that the only reaſon why he bound not the Precepts of the Goſpel upon our Conſciences by any ſecular Compulſories, was not becauſe Compulſion was an improper way to put his Laws in execution, for then he had never eſtabliſhed them with more enforcing ſanctions; but only becauſe himſelf was not inveſted with any ſecular Power,

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and ſo could not uſe thoſe methods of Government, that are proper to its Juriſdiction.

§ 16. And therefore the Power, wherewith Chriſt intruſted the Governours of his Church in the Apoſtolical Age, was purely ſpiritual; they had no Authority to inflict temporal Puniſhments, or to force men to ſubmit to their Canons, Laws and Penalties; they only declared the Laws of God, and denounced the threatnings annexed to them, having no Coercive Power to inflict the Judgments they declared, and leaving the event of their Cenſures to the Divine Juriſdiction. Though alas! all this was too weak to attain the ends of Diſcipline (*viz.* to reclaim the offending Perſon, and by example of his Cenſure to awe others into Obedience) and could have but little influence upon the moſt ſtubborn and notorious Offenders. For to what purpoſe ſhould they drive one from the Communion of the Church, that has already renounced it? To what purpoſe ſhould they deny him the Inſtruments and Miniſtries of Religion, that cares not for them? To what purpoſe

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ſhould they turn him out of their Society, that has already prevented them by forſaking it? How ſhould offenders be reclaim'd, by being condemn'd to what they chuſe? How ſhould they be ſcared by threatnings, that they neither fear nor believe? And if they will turn Apoſtates, how can they be awed back into their Faith by being told they are ſo? And therefore becauſe of the weakneſs of this ſpiritual Government to attain the ends of Diſcipline, and becauſe that the Governours of the Church being ſubject to thoſe of the Common-wealth, they were not capable of any coercive Power; 'tis wonderfully remarkable how God himſelf was pleaſed to ſupply their want of Civil Juriſdiction by his own immediate Providence, and in a miraculous manner to inflict the Judgments they denounced; that if their Cenſures could not affright refractory Offenders into Obedience, his Dreadful execution of them might. For 'tis notoriouſly evident from the beſt Records of the Primitive and Apoſtolical Ages, that the Divine Providence was pleaſed to abet the Cenſures of the Church by immediate and Miraculous inflictions from Heaven. In

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thoſe times torments and diſeaſes of the Body were the uſual conſequents of Excommunication; and this was as effectual to awe men into ſubjection to the Eccleſiaſtical Government, as if it had been endued with *coercive Juriſdiction*. For this conſiſts only in a power of inflicting temporal puniſhments; and therefore when the Anathema's of the Church were attended with ſuch Inflictions, Criminals muſt have as much reaſon to dread the Rod of the Apoſtles, as the Sword of the Civil Magiſtrate, in that it carried with it a power of inflicting temporal Penalties, either of Death, as on *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, or of Diſeaſes, as on *Elymas* the Sorcerer. And this is that ῥάβδος wherewith St. *Paul* ſo often threatens to laſh the factious *Corinthians* into a more quiet and peaceable temper. Thus 1 *Cor.* 4. 21. *What will ye? ſhall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs?* i.e. Conſider with your ſelves, that ſeeing I have determined to *viſit* the Church of *Corinth*, whether when I come you had rather I ſhould chaſtiſe you with the Apoſtolical Rod by exerciſing my Power of inflicting puniſhments, and by conſigning the refractory to thoſe ſharp

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and grievous Diſeaſes that are wont immediately to follow *Apoſtolical Cenſures*; or whether I ſhould come with a more gentle and merciful deſign without being forced by your ſtubborneſs upon a neceſſity of uſing this ſeverity among you? As you behave your ſelves, ſo may you expect to find me at my coming. And thus again, 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. He threatens them with his being *in a readineſs* (if he ſhould come among them) *to revenge all their diſobedience:* And upon this account he immediately profeſſes himſelf not aſhamed to boaſt of his Power and Authority in the Church. And in the 13. *Chapter* of the ſame Epiſtle, he again ſhakes the ſame Rod over them, threatning, that if their refractorineſs force him to ſtrike them with ſome Judgment, that it ſhould be a ſharp and ſevere one: *If I come again I will not ſpare, ſince ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me.* Theſe extraordinary inflictions were ſigns and evidences of his Apoſtleſhip. And he would make them know, that he was Commiſſioned by Chriſt to teach and govern their Church, by making them to feel the ſad effects of his Miraculous Power, if nothing elſe would ſatisfie

tisfie them about the right of his Authority. And to the ſame purpoſe is the ſame Apoſtles command to the ſame Church concerning the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, 1 *Cor.* 5.5. that they ſhould *deliver him to Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh*, i. e. that they ſhould denounce the ſentence of Excommunication againſt him, which would amount to no ſmaller a Puniſhment, than his being reſign'd up to the power and poſſeſſion of ſome evil ſpirit, ἵνα μαςίξῃ αὐτὸν ἕλκει πονηρῷ ἢ νόσῳ ἑτέρᾳ, *Chryſoſt. in* 1. *ad Cor. Hom.* 15. to be tormented with Ulcers, or ſome other bodily Diſeaſes and Inflictions, which was then the uſual conſequent of Excommunication. The end of all which is, as immediately follows, *The deſtruction of the fleſh, that the Spirit might be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus*, i. e. that being humbled and brought to a due ſenſe of his Sin by the ſadneſs of his Condition, and the heavy ſtrokes of this cruel Executioner of the Divine Juſtice, this might be a means of working him to Repentance and Reformation. And to the ſame end did the ſame Apoſtle deliver *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* unto Satan, *that they might learn not to blaſpheme*; that being vexed

vexed and tormented by ſome evil ſpirit, this might take down their proud and haughty ſtomachs, and make them ceaſe to traduce and diſparage his Apoſtolical Authority, when they had ſmarted ſo ſeverely for contradicting it. And thus was the Divine Providence pleaſed in the firſt Ages of the Church, when it wanted the aſſiſtance of the Civil Magiſtrate, to ſupply that defect by his own Almighty Power: ſo neceſſary is a coercive Juriſdiction to the due Government and Diſcipline of the Church, that God himſelf was fain to beſtow it on the Apoſtles in a miraculous manner. And thus was the Primitive Diſcipline maintain'd by Miracles of ſeverity, as long as it wanted the Sword of the Civil Power. But when Chriſtianity had once prevail'd and triumphed over all the oppoſitions of Pagan Superſtition, and had gain'd the Empire of the world into its own poſſeſſion, and was become the *Imperial Religion*, then began its Government to re-ſettle where nature had placed it, and the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction was annexed to the Civil Power: For as ſoon as the Emperours thought themſelves concern'd to look to its Government, and Protection,

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and were willing to abet the *Spiritual Power* of the Clergy with their *Secular Authority*; then began the Divine Providence to withdraw the miraculous Power of the Church (in the ſame manner as he did by degrees all the other extraordinary Gifts of the Apoſtolical Age, as their neceſſity ceaſed) as being now as well ſupplied by the natural & ordinary Power of the Prince. So that though the Exerciſe of the Miniſterial Function ſtill continued in the Perſons, that were thereunto Originally Commiſſioned by our Saviour, the Exerciſe of its Authority and Juriſdiction was reſtored to the *Imperial Diadem*; aud the Biſhops became then (as they are now) Miniſters of State as well as Religion, and challenged not any Secular Power, but what they derived from the Prince: who, ſuppoſing them beſt able to underſtand and manage the Intereſts of Religion, granted them Commiſſions for the Government of the Church under himſelf, and veſted them with as much Coercive Power, as was neceſſary for the Execution of their Office and Juriſdiction: In the ſame manner as Judges are deputed by the Supreme Authority of every Com-

mon-wealth to govern the Affairs of Justice, and to inflict the Penalties of the Law upon Delinquents: So that Bishops neither have, nor ever had any *Temporal Authority*, but only as they are the Kings Ecclesiastical Judges, appointed by him to govern Affairs of Religion, as Civil or Secular Judges are to govern Affairs of Justice.

§ 17. And now that the Government of all the Affairs of the Church devolved upon the Royal Authority assoon as it became Christian, is undeniably evident, from all the Laws and Records of the Empire: ἀφ' ὃ χριστιανίζειν ἤρξαντο βασιλῆς, τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πράγματα ἤρτητο ἐξ αὐτῶν: *From the time that the Emperors became Christian, the Disposal and Government of Church Affairs depended entirely on their Authority:* *Constantine* was no sooner settled in his Imperial Throne, but he took the settlement of all Ecclesiastical matters into his own Cognizance: He called Synods and Councils, in order to the Peace and Government of the Church, he ratified their Canons into Laws, he prohibited the Conventicles of the *Donatists*,

Socr. l. 5. Præf.

natiſts, and demoliſh'd their *Meeting-Houſes*, he made Edicts concerning Feſtivals, the Rites of Sepulture, the Immunities of Churches, the Authority of Biſhops, the Priviledges of the Clergy, and divers other things appertaining to the outward Polity of the Church. In the exerciſe of which Juriſdiction he was carefully followed by all his Succeſſours: which cannot but be known to every man that is not as utterly ignorant of the Civil Law, as he in the Comedy who ſuppoſed *Corpus Juris Civilis* to be a *Dutchman*. The Code, the Authenticks, the *French* Capitulars are full of Eccleſiaſtical Laws and Conſtitutions. The firſt Book of the *Code* treats of nothing but Religion, and the Rites and Ceremonies of Publick Worſhip, the Priviledges of Eccleſiaſtical Men and Things, the diſtinct Offices and Functions of the ſeveral degrees in the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy, and the Power and Juriſdiction of Biſhops both in Civil and Religious Affairs, and infinite other things that immediately concern the Intereſts of Religion. And then as for the *Authenticks*, Eccleſiaſtical Laws are every where ſcattered up and down through

the whole Volume; which being divided into nine *Collations*, has not above one (*viz.* the fourth) that has not divers Laws relating to Church Affairs. And as for the Capitulars of *Charles the Great*, together with the Additions of *Lewis the Godly*, his Son and Succeſſour, they contain little elſe but Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions; as may be ſeen in *Lindembrogius* his Collection of Ancient Laws, together with divers other Laws of *Theodorick*, and other *Gothiſh* Kings.

§ 18. And next to the Divine Providence, we owe the Settlement and Preſervation of Chriſtian Religion in the World to the Conduct of Chriſtian Princes. For by the time of *Conſtantine* the Primitive Spirit and Genius of Chriſtianity was wearing out of faſhion, and the Meekneſs and Humility of its firſt Profeſſours began to give place to a furious and tumultuary Zeal; and no ſooner did the heats of Perſecution begin to abate, but the Church was preſently ſhattered into ſwarms of Factions by the violent Paſſions and Animoſities of its Members about bare Speculations or uſeleſs Practices: And of all the quarrels that

that ever diſturbed the World, there were never any perhaps ſo excuſeleſs or ſo irregular as thoſe of Chriſtendom; of which 'tis hard to determine, whether they were commenced with more folly and indiſcretion, or purſued with more paſſion and frowardneſs. The rage and fierceneſs of Chriſtians had kindled ſuch a Fire in the Church, that it muſt unavoidably have been conſumed by its own Combuſtions, had not the Chriſtian Emperours employed all their Power to ſuppreſs the Fury of the Flames. And though in ſpight of all their Prudence and Induſtry, Chriſtianity was ſadly impaired by its own Tumults and Seditions; yet had it not been for the care of Chriſtian Princes, it had in all humane probability been utterly deſtroyed; and the Flames that had once caught its Superſtructures, muſt without remedy have burnt up its very Foundations. And if we look into the Records and Hiſtories of the firſt Chriſtian Emperours, we ſhall find that the moſt dangerous Diſturbances that threatned the State, had their beginnings in the Church; and that the Empire was more ſhaken by the inteſtine Commotions that aroſe

from Religion, than by Foreign Wars and Invaſions. And upon this account is it, that we find them ſo highly concern'd to reconcile all the Diſcords, and allay all the Heats about Religion, by ſilencing needleſs and unprofitable Controverſies, determining certain & neceſſary Truths, preſcribing decent Rites & Ceremonies of Publick Worſhip, and all other wiſe and prudent Expedients to bring the minds and practices of men to Sobriety and Moderation.

§ 19. And by this means was the outward Polity of the Church tolerably well eſtabliſhed, and the Affairs of Religion competently well grounded (though better or worſe, according to the wiſdom and vigilance of the ſeveral Emperours) till the Biſhops of *Rome* uſurp'd one half of the Imperial Power, and annexed the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction and Supremacy to their own See. For taking advantage of the Diſtractions occaſioned partly by the Incurſions of the Northern Nations on the Weſt, partly by the Invaſions of the *Turkiſh* Power on the Eaſt, but mainly by the Diviſion of the Empire it ſelf, they gain'd

gain'd either by force or fraud the whole Dominion of Religion to themſelves, and by pretending to the Spirit of Infallibility, uſurp'd an abſolute and uncontroulable Empire over the Faiths and Conſciences of mankind. And whilſt they at firſt pretended no other Title to their Sovereignty but what they derived from Religion, they were conſtrain'd to ſcrue up their Power to an unmeaſurable Tyranny, thereby to ſecure themſelves in thoſe Inſolencies and Indignities wherewith they perpetually affronted the Princes of Chriſtendom: And knowing the *Free-born Reaſon* of men would never tamely brook to be enſlaved to ſo ignoble a *Tyranny*, they proclaim'd it a *Traytour* or (what is the ſame) a *Heretick* to the Catholick Faith, and by their lowd noiſes and menaces frighted it out of Chriſtendom. In which deſign they at length advanced ſo far, till *Rome* Chriſtian became little leſs fond and ſuperſtitious than *Rome* Heathen; and Chriſtianity it ſelf was almoſt debauched to the loweſt guiſe of Paganiſm, and *Europe*, the Seat of the moſt refined and politeſt part of mankind, was involved in a more than *African*

Ignorance and Barbarity. And thus did they eaſily uſher in the grand *departure* and Apoſtaſie from Religion by the *falling away* from Reaſon, and founded the *Roman* Faith as well as *Empire* upon the Ruines of Humane Liberty.

§ 20. In which ſad poſture continued the Affairs of Chriſtendom till the *Reformation*: which though it has wrought wonderful Alterations in the Chriſtian World, yet has it not been able to reſettle Princes in their full & natural Rights, in reference to the Concerns of Religion. For although the Supremacy of the Civil Power in Religious matters be expreſly aſſerted in all the Publick Confeſſions of the Reformed Churches, but eſpecially in that of the Church of *England*; which is not content barely to affirm it, but denounces the Sentence of Excommunication againſt all that deny it: Yet by reaſon of the exorbitant Power that ſome pert and pragmatical Divines have gain'd over the minds of the People, this great Article has found little or no entertainment in their Practices: there ſtarting up a race of proud and imperious men about the beginning of the

the Reformation, who, not regarding the Princes Power, took upon themſelves to frame preciſe *Hypotheſes* of Orthodoxy, and to ſet up their own *Pedantick Syſtems and Inſtitutions* for the Standards of Divine Truth; and wanting, what the other had, the Authority of Preſcription, they pretended to the Spirit of God: and this pretence not only excuſed, but juſtified any wild Theorems they could not prove by ſober Reaſon; and thoſe that would be awed with it, they embraced for Orthodox, and thoſe that would not, they branded for Hereticks: by which little device they decoyed the ſilly and ignorant rabble into their own party. The effect of all which has been nothing but a Brutiſh and Fanatick Ignorance, making men to talk of little elſe but Raptures and Extaſies, and filling the World with a buzze and noiſe of the Divine Spirit; whereby they are only impregnably poſſeſs'd with their own wild and extravagant Fanſies, become ſaucy and impudent for Religion, confound Order, and deſpiſe Government, and will be guided by nothing but the whimſies and humours of an unaccountable Conſcience.

§ 21. And

§ 21. And hence it comes to pass, that most Protestant Princes have been frighted (not to say Hector'd) out of the Exercise of their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction by the Clamours of giddy and distemper'd Zealots; Superstition and Enthusiasm have out-fac'd the Laws, and put Government out of Countenance by the boldness of their Pretensions. Confident men have talked so lowdly of the Inviolable Sacredness and Authority of their Consciences, that Governours, not throughly instructed in the nature and extent of their Power, so lately restored to them, have been almost scared from intermedling with any thing, that could upon this score plead its Priviledge and Exemption from their Commands. And how peremptory soever some of them have been in asserting the Rights of their Supreme Power in Civil Affairs, they have been forced to seem modest and diffident in the exercise of their Ecclesiastical Supremacy, and dare scarce own their Legislative Power in Religious Affairs, only to comply with the saucy pretences of ungovernable and Tumultuary Zeal.

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One notorious Inſtance whereof in our own Nation, is the *Jejunium Cecilianum*, the Wedneſday Faſt, that was injoin'd with this clauſe of Exception, *That if any perſon ſhould affirm it to be impoſed with an Intention to bind the Conſcience, he ſhould be puniſhed like the ſpreaders of falſe News.* 'Which is plain-'ly to them that underſtand it, (as a late 'Learned Prelate of our own obſerves) 'a direct Artifice to evacuate the whole 'Law: for (as he excellently argues) 'all Humane Power being derived 'from God, and bound upon our Con-'ſciences by his Power, not by Man, 'he that ſays it ſhall not bind the Con-'ſcience, ſays it ſhall be no Law; 'it ſhall have no Authority from God, 'and then it has none at all; and if it 'be not tied upon the Conſcience, 'then to break it is no Sin, and then to 'keep it is no Duty. So that a Law 'without ſuch an intention is a Con-'tradiction; it is a Law which binds on-'ly if we pleaſe, and we may obey 'when we have a mind to it; and to ſo 'much we are tied before the Conſti-'tution. But then if by ſuch a Declara-'tion it was meant, That to keep ſuch

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'Faſting-days was no part of a direct 'Commandment from God, that is, God 'had not required them by himſelf im-'mediately, and ſo it was (abſtracting 'from that Law) no Duty Evangelical, 'it had been below the wiſdom of the 'Contrivers of it; for no man pretends 'it, no man ſays it, no man thinks it: 'and they might as well have declar'd, 'That the Law was none of the Ten 'Commandments. The matter indeed of this Law was not of any great moment, but the Declaration annexed to it proved of a fatal and miſchievous conſequence; for when once the unruly Conſciences of the *Puritans* were got looſe from the reſtraints of Authority, nothing could give check to their giddy and furious Zeal, but they ſoon broke out into the moſt impudent Affronts and Indignities againſt the Laws, and ran themſelves into all manner of diſloyal Outrages againſt the State. As is notoriouſly evident in the Writings and Practices of *Cartwright*, *Goodman*, *Whittingham*, *Gilby*, *Whitehead*, *Travers*, and other leading Rabbies of the Holy Faction; whoſe Treatiſes are ſtuffed with as railing, ſpightful, and malicious

malicious Speeches both againſt their Prince, the Clergy, the Lords of the Council, the Judges, the Magiſtrates, and the Laws, as were ever publickly vented by the worſt of Traytors in any Society in the world. And as for the method of their Polity, it was plainly no more than this, firſt to reproach the Church with infamous and Abuſive Dialogues, and then to Libel the State with bitter and Scurrilous Pamphlets, to poſſeſs mens minds with diſlikes and jealouſies about Publick Affairs, whiſper about reproachful and ſlanderous Reports, inveigle the people with a thouſand little and malicious Stories, enter into ſecret Leagues and Confederacies, foment Diſcontents and Seditions, and in every ſtreight and exigence of State threaten and beleaguer Authority: In fine, the ſcope of all their Sermons and Diſcourſes was to perſwade their Party, *that if Princes refuſe to reform Religion, 'tis lawful for the People with Direction of their Godly Miniſters,* (i. e. themſelves) *to do it, and that by violent and forcible courſes.* And whither this Principle in proceſs of time led them, the Story is too long, too ſad, and too well known

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to be here repeated: 'tis ſufficient, that it improved it ſelf into the greateſt Villanies, & concluded in the blackeſt Tragedy that was ever acted upon this Iſland.

§ 22. Well then, to ſum up the reſult of this Diſcourſe, 'tis evident, we ſee, both from Reaſon and Experience, what a powerful influence Religion has upon the peace and quiet of Kingdoms; that nothing ſo effectually ſecures the publick Peace, or ſo eaſily works its diſturbance and ruine, as its well or ill Adminiſtration; and therefore that there is an abſolute neceſſity that there be ſome Supreme Power in every Commonwealth to take care of its due Conduct and Settlement; that this muſt be the Civil Magiſtrate, whoſe Office it is to ſecure the publick Peace, which becauſe he cannot ſufficiently provide for, unleſs he have the Power and Conduct of Religion; its Government muſt of neceſſity be ſeated in him and none elſe. So that thoſe perſons, who would exempt Conſcience and all Religious Matters from the Princes Power, muſt make him either a Tyrant or an impotent Prince; for if he take upon him to tye Laws of Religion upon

upon their Conſciences, then according to their Principles, he uſurps an unlawful Dominion, violates the Fundamental Rights and Priviledges of Mankind, and invades the *Throne* and *Authority* of God himſelf: But if he confeſs that he cannot, then does he clearly paſs away the bigeſt Security of his Government, and lay himſelf open to all the Plots and Villanies that can put on the *Maſk of Religion*. And therefore ſhould any Prince through unhappy miſcarriages in the State be brought into ſuch ſtreights and exigences of Affairs, as that he cannot reſtrain the head-ſtrong Inclinations of his Subjects, without the hazard of raiſing ſuch Commotions and Diſturbances, as perhaps he can never be able to allay, and ſo ſhould be forced in ſpight of himſelf to indulge them their Liberty in their Fanſies and Perſwaſions about Religion; yet unleſs he will deveſt himſelf of a more material and more neceſſary part of his Authority, than if he ſhould grant away his Power of the *Militia*, or his Prerogative of ratifying all *Civil Laws*; unleſs, I ſay, he will thus hazard his Crown, and make himſelf too weak for Government by renouncing

nouncing the beſt part of his *Supremacy*, he muſt lay an Obligation upon all Perſons, to whom he grants this their Religious freedom, to profeſs that 'tis matter of meer favour and indulgence; and that he has as much Power to govern all the publick Affairs of Religion, as any other matters that are either conducive, or prejudicial to the publick Peace and Quiet of the Common-wealth. And if they be brought to this Declaration, they will but confeſs themſelves (to ſay no worſe) Turbulent and Seditious perſons, by acknowledging, That they refuſe their Obedience to thoſe Laws, which the Supreme Authority has juſt Power to impoſe.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

A more Particular Account of the Nature and Neceſsity of a Sovereign Power in Affairs of Religion.

The Contents.

THE Parallel between matters relating to Religious Worſhip, and the Duties of Morality. Moral Vertues the moſt material Parts of Religion. This proved, (1.) from the Nature of Morality, and the Deſign of Religion: (2.) By a particular Induction of all the Duties of Mankind. A Scheme of Religion, reducing all its Branches either to the Vertues or Inſtruments of Morality. Of the Villany of thoſe mens Religion, that are wont to diſtinguiſh

between Grace and Virtue. They exchange the ſubſtance of true Goodneſs for meer Metaphors and Allegories. Metaphors the only cauſe of our preſent Schiſm; and the only ground of the different Subdiviſions among the Schiſmaticks themſelves. The Unaccountableneſs of Mens Conceits, That when the main Ends and Deſigns of Religion are undoubtedly ſubject to the Supreme Power, they ſhould be ſo eager to exempt its Means and Circumſtances from the ſame Authority. The Civil Magiſtrate may determine new Inſtances of Virtue; how much more new Circumſtances of Worſhip? As he may enjoyn any thing in Morality, that contradicts not the ends of Morality; ſo may he in Religious Worſhip, if he oppoſe not its deſign. He may command any thing in the Worſhip of God, that does not tend to debauch Mens practices, or their conceptions of the Deity. All the ſubordinate Duties both of Morality and Religious Worſhip, are equally ſubject to the Determinations of Humane Authority.

§ 1. Having

§ 1. HAving in the former Chapter ſufficiently made out my firſt Propoſition, *viz.* That 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Government of the World, that the Supreme Magiſtrate of every Common-wealth ſhould be veſted with a Power to govern the Conſciences of Subjects in Affairs of Religion; I now proceed to the proof of the ſecond thing propoſed, *viz.* That thoſe who would deprive the Supreme Civil Power of its Authority in reference to the Conduct of the Worſhip of God, are forced to allow it in other more material parts of Religion, though they are both liable to the ſame Inconveniences and Objections: Where I ſhall have a fair opportunity to ſtate the true extent of the Magiſtrates Power over Conſcience in reference to Divine Worſhip, by ſhewing it to be the ſame with his Power over Conſcience in matters of Morality, and all other Affairs of Religion. And here it ſtrikes me with wonder and amazement to conſider, That men ſhould be ſo ſhy of granting the Supreme Magiſtrate a Power over their Conſciences

in the Rituals and External Circumſtances of Religious Worſhip, and yet be ſo free of forcing it upon him in the Eſſential Duties of Morality; which are at leaſt as great and material Parts of Religion, as pleaſing to God, and as indiſpenſably neceſſary to Salvation, as any way of Worſhip in the World. The Precepts of the Moral Law are both perfective of our own Natures, and conducive to the Happineſs of others; and the Practice of Vertue conſiſts in living ſuitably to the Dictates of Reaſon & Nature. And this is the ſubſtance and main Deſign of all the Laws of Religion, to oblige Mankind to behave themſelvs in all their actions as becomes Creatures endued with Reaſon and Underſtanding, and in ways ſuitable to Rational Beings, to prepare and qualifie themſelves for the ſtate of Glory and Immortality. And as this is the proper End of all Religion, That Mankind might live happily here, and happily hereafter; ſo to this end nothing contributes more than the practice of all Moral Vertues, which will effectually preſerve the Peace and Happineſs of Humane Societies, and advance the Mind of Man to a nearer approach to the Perfe-

ction

ction of the Divine Nature; every particular Vertue being therefore such, because 'tis a Resemblance and Imitation of some of the Divine Attributes. So that Moral Vertue having the strongest and most necessary influence upon the End of all Religion, *viz.* Mans Happiness; 'tis not only its most material and useful Part, but the ultimate End of all its other Duties: And all true Religion can consist in nothing else but either the Practice of Vertue it self, or the use of those Means and Instruments that contribute to it.

§ 2. And this, beside the Rational Account of the thing it self, appears with an undeniable evidence from the best of Demonstrations, *i. e.* an Induction of all Particulars. The whole Duty of Man refers either to his Creator, or his Neighbour, or himself: All that concerns the two last is confessedly of a *Moral Nature*; and all that concerns the first, consists either in Praising of God, or Praying to him. The former is a Branch of the Vertue of Gratitude, and is nothing but a thankful and humble temper of mind, arising from a sense of Gods Greatness

in himſelf, and his Goodneſs to us: ſo that this part of Devotion iſſues from the ſame virtuous quality, that is the Principle of all other Reſentments and Expreſſions of Gratitude; only thoſe Acts of it that are terminated on God as their Object, are ſtyled Religious: and therefore Gratitude and Devotion are not divers Things, but only different Names of the ſame Thing; Devotion being nothing elſe but the Virtue of Gratitude towards God. The latter, *viz.* Prayer is either put up in our own or other mens behalfs: If for others, 'tis an Act of that Virtue we call Kindneſs or Charity: If for our ſelves, the things we pray for (unleſs they be the Comforts and Enjoyments of this life) are ſome or other virtuous Qualities: and therefore the proper and direct uſe of Prayer is to be inſtrumental to the Virtues of *Morality*: So that all Duties of Devotion (excepting only our returns of Gratitude) are not Eſſential parts of Religion, but are only in order to it, as they tend to the Practice of Virtue and moral Goodneſs; and their Goodneſs is derived upon them from the moral Virtues to which they contribute; and in the

the ſame proportion they are conducive to the ends of Virtue, they are to be valued among the Miniſteries of Religion. All Religion then (I mean the Practical Part) is either Virtue it ſelf, or ſome of its Inſtruments; and the whole Duty of man conſiſts in being Virtuous; and all that is enjoin'd him beſide, is in order to it. And what elſe do we find enforc'd and recommended in our Saviour's Sermons, beſide heights of Morality? What does St. *Paul* diſcourſe of to *Felix* but moral matters, *Righteouſneſs, and Temperance, and Judgment to come?* And what is it that men ſet up againſt Morality, but a few figurative Expreſſions of it ſelf, that without it are utterly inſignificant? 'Tis not enough (ſay they) to be completely Virtuous, unleſs we have Grace too: But when we have ſet aſide all manner of Virtue, let them tell me what remains to be call'd *Grace*, and give me any Notion of it diſtinct from all Morality, that conſiſts in the right order and government of our Actions in all our Relations, and ſo comprehends all our Duty: and therefore if Grace be not included in it, 'tis but a Phantaſm, and an Imaginary thing. So

that if we ſtrip thoſe Definitions that ſome men of late have beſtowed upon it, of Metaphors and Allegories, it will plainly ſignifie nothing but a vertuous temper of mind; and all that the Scripture intends by the Graces of the Spirit, are only *Vertuous Qualities* of the Soul, that are therefore ſtyled Graces, becauſe they were derived purely from Gods free Grace and Goodneſs, in that in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity he was pleaſed, out of his infinite concern for its Propagation, in a miraculous manner to inſpire its Converts with all ſorts of Vertue. Wherefore the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, when he compiles a complete Catologue of the *Fruits of the Spirit*, reckons up only Moral Vertues, *Gal.* 5. 22. Love, Joy or Chearfulneſs, Peaceableneſs, Patience, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faithfulneſs, Meekneſs, and Temperance; and elſewhere, *Titus* 2. 11. the ſame Apoſtle plainly makes the Grace of God to conſiſt in gratitude towards God, Temperance towards our ſelves, and Juſtice towards our Neighbours. *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould*

ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world. Where the whole Duty of Man is comprehended in living *Godlily*, which is the Vertue of humble Gratitude towards God: *Soberly*, which contains the Vertues of Temperance, Chaſtity, Modeſty, and all others that conſiſt in the dominion of Reaſon over our ſenſual Appetites: *Righteouſly*, which implies all the Vertues of Juſtice and Charity, as Affability, Courteſie, Meekneſs, Candour, and Ingenuity.

§ 3. So deſtructive of all true and real Goodneſs is the very Religion of thoſe Men that are wont to ſet Grace at odds with Vertue, and are ſo far from making them the ſame, that they make them inconſiſtent; and though a man be exact in all the Duties of Moral Goodneſs, yet if he be a *Graceleſs Perſon* (*i. e.* void of I know not what Imaginary Godlineſs) he is but in a cleaner way to Hell, and his *Converſion* is more hopeleſs than the vileſt and moſt notorious Sinners; and the *Morally Righteous Man* is at a greater diſtance from Grace than the *Profane*, and better be lewd and debauch'd, than live an honeſt and vertuous life,

life, if you are not of the Godly Party. *Bona Opera ſunt pernicioſa ad ſalutem*, ſays *Flaccus Illiricus*. Moral Goodneſs is the greateſt Let to Converſion; and the prophaneſt wretches make better Saints than *your Moral Formaliſts*. And by this means they have brought into faſhion a Godlineſs without Religion, Zeal without Humanity, and Grace without good Nature, or good Manners; have found out in lieu of Moral Virtue, a *Spiritual Divinity*, that is made up of nothing elſe but certain Trains and Schemes of Effeminate Follies and illiterate Enthuſiaſms; and inſtead of a ſober Devotion, a more ſpiritual and intimate way of Communion with God, that in truth conſiſts in little elſe but meeting together in private to prate Phraſes, make Faces, and rail at Carnal Reaſon (*i. e.* in their ſenſe all ſober and ſincere uſe of our Underſtandings in ſpiritual Matters) whereby they have effectually turn'd all Religion into unaccountable Fanſies and Enthuſiaſms, dreſt it up with pompous and empty Schemes of Speech, and ſo embrace a few gawdy Metaphors and Allegories, inſtead of the ſubſtance of true and real Righteouſneſs.

And

And herein lies the moſt material difference between the ſober Chriſtians of the Church of *England*, and our modern Sectaries, That we expreſs the Precepts and Duties of the Goſpel in plain and intelligible Terms, whilſt they trifle them away by childiſh Metaphors and Allegories, and will not talk of Religion but in barbarous and uncouth Similitudes; and (what is more) the different Subdiviſions among the Sects themſelves are not ſo much diſtinguiſh'd by any real diverſity of Opinions, as by variety of Phraſes and Forms of Speech, that are the peculiar *Shibboleths* of each Tribe. One party affect to lard their Diſcourſes with clowniſh and ſlovenly Similitudes; another delights to roul in wanton and laſcivious Allegories; and a third is beſt pleaſed with odd, unuſual, unintelligible, and ſometimes blaſphemous Expreſſions. And whoever among them can invent any new Language, preſently ſets up for a man of new Diſcoveries; and he that lights upon the prettieſt Nonſenſe, is thought by the ignorant Rabble to unfold new Goſpel-Myſteries. And thus is the Nation ſhattered into infinite Factions, with ſenſleſs and phantaſtick Phraſes;

Phraſes; and the moſt fatal miſcarriage of them all lies in abuſing Scripture-Expreſſions, not only without but in contradiction to their ſenſe. So that had we but an Act of Parliament to abridge Preachers the uſe of fulſom and luſcious Metaphors, it might perhaps be an effectual Cure of all our preſent Diſtempers. Let not the Reader ſmile at the odneſs of the Propoſal: For were men obliged to ſpeak Senſe as well as Truth, all the ſwelling *Myſteries of Fanaticiſm* would immediately ſink into flat and empty Nonſenſe; and they would be aſhamed of ſuch jejune and ridiculous Stuff as their admired and moſt profound Notions would appear to be, when they want the Varniſh of fine Metaphors and glittering Alluſions. In brief, were this a proper place to unravel all their affected Phraſes and Forms of Speech, which they have learn'd like Parrots to prate by Rote, without having any Notion of the Things they ſignifie, it would be no unpleaſant Task to demonſtrate, That by them they either mean nothing at all, or ſome Part or Inſtrument of Moral Vertue. So that all Religion muſt of neceſſity be reſolv'd into Enthuſiaſm or Morality.

rality. The former is meer Impoſture, and therefore all that is true muſt be reduced to the latter; and what-ever beſides appertains to it, muſt be ſubſervient to the Ends of Vertue: ſuch are Prayer, Hearing Sermons, and all manner of Religious Ordinances, that have directly no other place in Religion, than as they are inſtrumental to a vertuous life.

§ 4. 'Tis certain then, That the Duties of Morality are the moſt weighty and material concerns of Religion; and 'tis as certain, That the Civil Magiſtrate has Power to bind Laws concerning them upon the Conſciences of Subjects: So that every mans Conſcience is and muſt be ſubject to the Commands of lawful Superiours in the moſt important matters of Religion. And therefore is it not ſtrange, that when the main Ends and deſigns of all Religion are avowedly ſubject to the Supreme Power, that yet men ſhould be ſo impatient to exempt its means and ſubordinate Inſtruments from the ſame Authority? What reaſon can the Wit of man aſſign to reſtrain it from one, that will not much more reſtrain

ſtrain it from both? Is not the right practice of Moral Duties as neceſſary a part of Religion, as any outward Form of Worſhip in the World? Are not wrong Notions of the Divine Worſhip as deſtructive of the Peace and ſettlement of Common-wealths, as the moſt vicious and licentious Debaucheries? Are not the rude multitude more inclined to diſturb Government by Superſtition than by Licentiouſneſs? And is there not vaſtly greater danger of the Magiſtrates erring in matters of Morality, than in Forms and Ceremonies of Worſhip, in that thoſe are the main, eſſential, and ultimate Duties of Religion; whereas theſe are at higheſt but their Inſtruments, and can challenge no other place in Religion, than as they are ſubſervient to the purpoſes of Morality? Nay, is it not ſtill more unaccountable, that the Supreme Magiſtrate may not be permitted to determine the Circumſtances and Appendages of the ſubordinate Miniſteries to Moral Virtue, and yet ſhould be allowed (in all Common-wealths) to determine the particular Acts and Inſtances of theſe Virtues themſelves? For Example, Juſtice is a prime and natural Virtue,

and

and yet its particular Caſes depend upon humane Laws, that determine the bounds of *Meum* and *Tuum*: The Divine Law reſtrains *Titius* from invading *Caius*'s Right and Propriety; but what that is, and when it is invaded, only the Laws of the Society they live in can determine. And there are ſome Caſes that are Acts of Injuſtice in *England*, that are not ſo in *Italy*; otherwiſe all Places muſt be govern'd by the ſame Laws, and what is a Law to one Nation muſt be ſo to all the World. Whereas 'tis undeniably evident, That neither the Law of God nor of Nature determine the particular Inſtances of moſt Virtues, but for the moſt part leave that to the Conſtitutions of National Laws. They in general forbid Theft, Inceſt, Murther, and Adultery; but what theſe Crimes are, they determine not in all Caſes, but is in moſt particulars to be explained by the Civil Conſtitutions; and whatſoever the Law of the Land reckons among theſe Crimes, that the Law of God and of Nature forbids.

And now is it not ſtrangely humourſome to ſay, That Magiſtrates are intruſted with ſo great a Power over mens Conſciences

ſcience in theſe great and weighty Deſigns of Religion, and yet ſhould not be truſted to govern the indifferent, or at leaſt leſs material Circumſtances of thoſe things that can pretend to no other Goodneſs, than as they are Means ſerviceable to Moral Purpoſes? That they ſhould have Power to make that a Particular of the Divine Law, that God has not made ſo; and yet not be able to determine the uſe of an indifferent Circumſtance, becauſe (forſooth) God has not determin'd it? In a word, That they ſhould be fully impowered to declare new Inſtances of Vertue and Vice, and to introduce new Duties in the moſt important parts of Religion, and yet ſhould not have Authority enough to declare the Uſe and decency of a few Circumſtances in its ſubſervient and leſs material Concerns.

§ 5. The whole State of Affairs is briefly this; Man is ſent into the World to live happily here, and prepare himſelf for happineſs hereafter; this is attain'd by the practice of Moral Vertues and Pious Devotions; and wherein theſe mainly conſiſt, Almighty Goodneſs has declared

clared by the Laws of Nature and Revelation: but becauſe in both there are changeable Caſes and Circumſtances of things, therefore has God appointed his Truſtees and Officials here on Earth to Act and Determine in both, according to all Accidents and Emergencies of Affairs, to aſſign new Particulars of the Divine Law, to declare new Bounds of right and wrong, which the Law of God neither does nor can limit; becauſe of neceſſity they muſt in a great meaſure depend upon the Cuſtoms and Conſtitutions of every Common-wealth. And in the ſame manner are the Circumſtances and outward Expreſſions of Divine Worſhip, becauſe they are variable according to the Accidents of Time and Place, entruſted (with leſs danger of Errour) with the ſame Authority. And what Ceremonies this appoints (unleſs they are apparently repugnant to their Prime end) become Religious Rites; as what particular Actions it conſtitutes in any *Species of Virtue*, become new Inſtances of that Virtue, unleſs they apparently contradict its Nature and Tendency.

Now the two Primary Deſigns of all Religion, are either to expreſs our ho-

nourable Opinion of the Deity, or to advance the Intereſts of Vertue and Moral Goodneſs; ſo that no Rites or Ceremonies can be eſteemed unlawful in the Worſhip of God, unleſs they tend to debauch men either in their Practices, or their Conceptions of the Deity: And 'tis upon one or both of theſe Accounts that any Rites and Forms of Worſhip become criminally ſuperſtitious; and ſuch were the *Lupercalia*, the *Eleuſinian* Myſteries, the Feaſts of *Bacchus*, *Flora*, and *Venus*, becauſe they were but ſo many Feſtivals of Luſt and Debauchery; and ſuch were the Salvage and Bloody Sacrifices to *Saturn*, *Bellona*, *Moloch*, *Baal-Peor*, and all other φεικτα μυσήεια of the Antient Paganiſm; becauſe they ſuppoſed the *Divine Being* to take pleaſure in the Miſeries and Tortures of its Creatures: And ſuch is all Idolatry, in that it either gives right Worſhip to a wrong Object, or wrong Worſhip to a right one, or at leaſt repreſents an infinite Majeſty by Images and Reſemblances of finite things, and ſo reflects diſparagement upon ſome of the Divine Attributes, by faſtning diſhonourable Weakneſſes and Imperfections upon the Divine Nature.

Nature. As for theſe, and the like Rites and Ceremonies of Worſhip, no Humane Power can command them, becauſe they are directly contradictory to the Ends of Religion; but as for all others that are not ſo, any lawful Authority may as well enjoyn them, as it may adopt any Actions whatſoever into the Duties of Morality, that are not contrary to the Ends of Morality.

§ 6. But a little farther to illuſtrate this, we may obſerve, That in matters both of Moral Vertue and Divine Worſhip there are ſome Rules of Good and Evil that are of an Eternal and Unchangeable Obligation, and theſe can never be prejudiced or altered by any Humane Power; becauſe the Reaſon of their Obligation ariſes from a neceſſity and conſtitution of Nature, and therefore muſt be as Perpetual as that: But then there are other Rules of Duty that are alterable according to the various Accidents, Changes, and Conditions of Humane Life, and depend chiefly upon Contracts, and Poſitive Laws of Kingdoms; theſe ſuffer Variety, becauſe their

Matter and their Reaſon does ſo. Thus in the matter of Murther there are ſome Inſtances of an unalterable Nature, and others that are changeable according to the various Proviſions of Poſitive Laws and Conſtitutions. To take away the life of an innocent Perſon is forbidden by ſuch an indiſpenſable Law of Nature, that no Humane Power can any way directly or indirectly make it become lawful, in that no Poſitive Laws can ſo alter the Conſtitution of Nature, as to make this Inſtance of Villany ceaſe to be miſchievous to Mankind; and therefore 'tis Capital in all Nations of the World. But then there are other particular Caſes of this Crime, that depend upon Poſitive Laws, and ſo by conſequence are liable to change according to the different Conſtitutions of the Commonwealths men live in. Thus though in *England* 'tis Murther for an injured Huſband to kill an Adultereſs taken in the Act of Uncleanneſs, becauſe 'tis forbidden by the Laws of this Kingdom, yet in *Spain* and among the old *Romans* it was not, becauſe their Laws permitted it; and if the Magiſtrate himſelf may puniſh the Crime with Death, he may

appoint

appoint whom he pleaſes to be his Executioner. And the Caſe is the ſame in reference to Divine Worſhip, in which there are ſome things of an abſolute and indiſpenſable Neceſſity, and others of a Tranſient and changeable Obligation: Thus 'tis abſolutely neceſſary every Rational Creature ſhould make returns of Gratitude to its Creator, from which no Humane Power can reſtrain it; but then for the outward Expreſſions and Significations of this Duty, they are for the moſt part Good or Evil according to the Cuſtoms and Conſtitutions of different Nations, unleſs in the two forementioned Caſes, that they either countenance Vice, or diſgrace the Deity. But as for all other Rituals, Ceremonies, Poſtures, & manners of performing the outward Expreſſions of Devotion, that are not chargeable with one or both of theſe, nothing can hinder their being capable of being adopted into the Miniſteries of Divine Service, or exempt them from being ſubject to the Determinations of Humane Power. And thus the Parallel holds in all Caſes between the Secondary and Emergent Laws of Morality, and the Subordinate and Inſtrumental Rules

of Worſhip; they both equally paſs an Obligation upon all men, to whom they are preſcribed, unleſs they directly contradict the ends of their Inſtitution.

And now from this more general Conſideration of the Agreement between matters of meer Worſhip and other Duties of Morality in reference to the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate, we may proceed by ſome more particular accounts to diſcover, how his Dominion over both is of equal extent, and reſtrain'd within the ſame bounds and meaſures; and that in what caſes ſoever he may exerciſe Juriſdiction over Conſcience in matters of Morality, in all the ſame he may exerciſe the ſame Power in Concerns of Religious Worſhip; and on the contrary, in what caſes his Power over matters of Religion is reſtrain'd, in all the ſame is it limited as to things of a Moral Nature: Whence it muſt appear with a clear and irreſiſtible Evidence, That mens right to Liberty of Conſcience is the ſame in both to all Caſes, Niceties, and Circumſtances of things, and that they may as rationally challenge a freedom from the Laws of Juſtice as from

those

those of Religion, and that to grant it in either is equally destructive of all Order and Government, and equally tends to reduce all Societies, to Anarchy and Confusion.

Chap. III.

A more Particular State of the Controversie, concerning the Inward Actions of the Mind, or Matters of meer Conscience.

The Contents.

Mankind have a Liberty of Conscience over all their Actions, whether Moral or strictly Religious, as far as it concerns their Judgments, but not their Practices. Of the Nature of Christian

Liberty. It relates to our Thoughts, and not to our Actions. It may be preſerved inviolable under outward Reſtraints. Chriſtian Liberty conſiſts properly in the Reſtauration of the Mind of Man to its Natural priviledge from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law. The ſubſtantial part of Religious Worſhip is internal, and out of the reach of the Civil Magiſtrate. External Worſhip in no part of Religion. It is and muſt be left undetermined by the Law of God. Sacrifices the moſt antient Expreſſions of Outward Worſhip were purely of Humane Inſtitution. Though their being expiatory depended upon a poſitive Law of God, yet their moſt proper and original Uſe, viz. *To expreſs the Significations of a Grateful Mind, depended on the Wills of Men. Of their firſt Original among the Heathens. The Reaſon why God preſcribed the particular Rites and Ceremonies of outward Worſhip to the Jews. Under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation he has left the diſpoſal of outward Worſhip to the power and diſcretion of the Church. The Impertinency of mens Clamours againſt Significant Ceremonies, when 'tis the only uſe of Ceremonies to be ſignificant.*

ſignificant. The Signification of all Ceremonies equally Arbitrary. The Signification of Ceremonies is of the ſame Nature with that of Words. And men may as well be offended at the one as the other.

§ 1. FIrſt then, Let all matters of *meer Conſcience*, whether purely Moral or Religious, be ſubject to Conſcience meerly, *i. e.* Let men think of things according to their own perſwaſions, and aſſert the Freedom of their Judgments againſt all the Powers of the Earth. This is the Prerogative of the Mind of Man within its own Dominion; its Kingdom is intellectual, and ſeated in the thoughts, not Actions of Men; and therefore no Humane Power does, or can preſcribe to any mans Opinions and ſecret Thoughts, but men will think as they pleaſe in ſpight of all their Decrees, and the Underſtanding will remain free when every thing elſe is bound. And this Sovereignty of Conſcience is no entrenchment upon that of Princes: becauſe 'tis concern'd only in ſuch matters as are of a quite different Nature from their Affairs,

Affairs, and gives no reſtraint to their commanding Power over the Actions of men; for meer Opinion, whilſt ſuch, has no Influence upon the Good or Evil of Humane Society, that is the proper object of Government; and therefore as long as our Thoughts are ſecret, and lock'd up within our own Breaſts, they are out of the reach of all Humane Power. But as for matters that are not confined within the Territories of meer Conſcience, but come forth into outward Action, and appear in the Societies of men, there is no remedy but they muſt be ſubject to the Cognizance of Humane Laws, and come within the Verge of Humane Power; becauſe by theſe Societies ſubſiſt, and humane Affairs are tranſacted. And therefore it concerns thoſe, whoſe Office it is to ſecure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, to govern and manage them in order to the Publick Good. So that 'tis but a vain and frivolous pretence, when men plead with ſo much noiſe and clamour for the Sacred and Inviolable Rights of Conſcience, and apparently invade or infringe the Magiſtrates Power, by ſubmitting its Commands to the Authority of every

Subjects

Subjects Conſcience; becauſe the Commands of Lawful Authority are ſo far from invading its proper Liberty, that they cannot reach it, in that 'tis ſeated in that part of Man, of whoſe Tranſactions the Civil Power can take no Cognizance. All Humane Authority and Juriſdiction extends no farther than mens outward Actions, theſe are the proper Object of all their Laws: Whereas Liberty of Conſcience is Internal and Inviſible, and confined to the minds and Judgments of men; and whilſt Conſcience acts within its proper Sphere, that Civil Power is ſo far from doing it violence, that it never can. But when this great and imperious Faculty paſſes beyond its own peculiar Bounds, and would invade the Magiſtrates Authority by exerciſing an unaccountable Dominion within his Territories, or by venting ſuch *Wild Opinions* among his Subjects, as he apprehends to tend to the diſturbance of the Publick Peace, then does it concern him to give check to its proceedings as much as to all other Invaſions; for the care of the Publick Good being his Duty, as well as Intereſt, it cannot but be in his Power to reſtrain or permit Actions, as they are con-

conducible to that End. Mankind therefore have the ſame Natural Right to Liberty of Conſcience in matters of Religious Worſhip, as in Affairs of Juſtice and Honeſty, *i. e.* a Liberty of *Judgment*, but not of *practice*; they have an inviolable freedom to examine the Goodneſs of all Laws Moral and Eccleſiaſtical, and to judge of them by their ſuitableneſs to the natural Reaſons of Good and Evil: but as for the Practice and all outward Actions either of Virtue or Devotion, they are equally governable by the Laws and Conſtitutions of Common-wealths; and men may with the ſame pretences of Reaſon challenge an Exemption from all Humane Laws in Matters of common Honeſty upon the ſcore of the Freedom of their Conſciences, as they plead a liberty from all Authority in Duties of Religious Worſhip upon the ſame account; becauſe they have a freedom of Judgment in both, but of Practice in neither.

§ 2. And upon the reaſonableneſs of this Principle is founded the Duty (or rather Priviledge) of *Chriſtian Liberty*, *viz.* To aſſert the Freedom of the Mind

of

of Man, as far as 'tis not inconsistent with the Government of the World, in that a sincere and impartial use of our own Understandings, is the first and Fundamental Duty of Humane Nature. Hence it is, that the Divine Providence is so highly solicitous not to have it farther restrained than needs must; and therefore in all matters of pure Speculation it leaves the mind of Man entirely free to judge of the Truth and Falshood of things, and will not suffer it to be usurp'd upon by any Authority whatsoever: And whatsoever Opinion any man entertains of things of this Nature, he injures no man by it, and therefore no man can have any reason to commence any Quarrel with him for it; Every man here judges for himself, and not for others, and matters of meer Opinion having no reference to the Publick, there is no need of any Publick Judgment to determine them. But as for those Actions that are capable of having any Influence upon the Publick Good or ill of Mankind, though they are liable to the Determinations of the Publick Laws, yet the Law of God will not suffer them to be determin'd farther than is requisite to the Ends of

Govern-

Government: And in those very things in which it has granted the Civil Magistrate a Power over the Practices of men, it permits them not to exercise any Authority over their Judgments, but leaves them utterly free to judge of them as far as they are Objects of meer Opinion, and relate not to the Common Interest of mankind. And hence, though the Commands of our Lawful Superiours may change Indifferent things into Necessary Duties, yet they cannot restrain the Liberty of our Minds from judging things thus determin'd to remain in their own Nature Indifferent; and the Reason of our Obligation to do them is not fetcht from any Antecedent Necessity in themselves, but from the Supervening Commands of Authority, to which Obedience in all things Lawful is a Necessary Duty. So that Christian Liberty, or the Inward Freedom of our Judgments may be preserved inviolable under the Restraints of the Civil Magistrate, which are Outward, and concern only the Actions, not Judgments of men; because the Outward Determination to one Particular rather than another does not abrogate the Inward Indifferency of the

thing

thing it ſelf; and the Duty of our Acting according to the Laws ariſes not from any Opinion of the Neceſſity of the thing it ſelf, but either from ſome Emergent and Changeable Circumſtances of Order and Decency, or from a ſenſe of the Abſolute Indiſpenſableneſs of the Duty of Obedience. Therefore the whole Affair of Chriſtian Liberty relates only to our Inward Judgment of things; and provided this be kept inviolate, it matters not (as to that Concern) what Reſtraints are laid upon our Outward Actions. In that though the Goſpel has freed our Conſciences from the Power of things, yet it has not from that of Government; we are free from the matter, but not from the Authority of Humane Laws; and as long as we obey the Determinations of our Superiours with an Opinion of the Indifferency of the things themſelves, we retain the Power of our Chriſtian Liberty, and are ſtill free as to the matter of the Law, though not as to the Duty of Obedience.

§ 2. Neither is this Prerogative of our Chriſtian Liberty ſo much any new Favour granted in the Goſpel, as the

Reſtau

Reſtauration of the mind of Man to its Natural Priviledge, by Exempting us from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, whereby things in themſelves indifferent were tied upon the Conſcience with as indiſpenſable an Obligation, as the Rules of Eſſential Goodneſs & Equity, during the whole Period of the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation; which being Cancell'd by the Goſpel, thoſe Indifferent things, that had been made neceſſary by a Divine poſitive Command, return'd to their own Nature, to be uſed or omitted only as occaſion ſhould direct. And upon this Account was it that St. *Paul*, though he were ſo earneſt an Aſſertor of his Chriſtian Liberty againſt the Doctrine of the Neceſſity of Jewiſh Ceremonies, never ſcrupled to uſe them, when ever he thought it ſerviceable to the Intereſts of Chriſtianity; as is apparent in his Circumciſion of *Timothy*, to which he would never have condeſcended out of Obſervation of the *Moſaick* Law, and yet did not in the leaſt ſcruple to do it for other Purpoſes as Prudence and Diſcretion ſhould direct him. And though in his Diſcourſes of Chriſtian Liberty he Inſtances only in Circumciſion, Meats and

Drinks,

Drinks, and other Ceremonial Ordinances, which were then the Particulars moſt in Diſpute between the Chriſtians and the Jews; yet by the cleareſt Analogy of Reaſon the Caſe is the ſame as to the Judicial Law, and all other things commanded by *Moſes*, that were not either Rules of Eternal Goodneſs, or expreſly eſtabliſh'd in the Goſpel: This being its cleareſt and moſt important Deſign, to reprieve Mankind from all the burdenſome and Arbitrary Impoſitions of *Moſes*, that were ſcarce capable of any other Goodneſs than their being Inſtances of Obedience; and to reſtore us to ſuch a Religion, as was moſt ſuitable to the perfection of Humane Nature; and to tye no other Laws upon us, than ſuch whoſe Natural and Intrinſick Goodneſs ſhould carry with them their own Eternal Obligation. And therefore whatſoever our Superiours impoſe upon us, whether in Matters of Religious Worſhip, or any other Duties of Morality, it neither is, nor can be any entrenchment upon our Chriſtian Liberty, provided it be not impoſed with an Opinion of the Antecedent Neceſſity of the thing it ſelf.

§ 4. Now the Design of what I have discourſed upon this Article of Chriſtian Liberty, is not barely to ſhew the manifeſt Impertinency of all thoſe little Objections men force from it againſt the Civil Magiſtrates Juriſdiction over the outward Concerns of Religion; whereas this relates entirely to things of a quite different Nature, and is only concern'd in the inward Actions of the Mind: but withal my purpoſe is mainly, by exempting all internal Acts of the Soul from the Empire of Humane Laws, to ſhew that Religion, properly ſo called, is of all Virtues the leaſt Obnoxious to the abuſe of Government, in that the whole ſubſtance of Religious Worſhip is tranſacted within the Mind of Man, and dwells in our Hearts and Thoughts beyond the reach of Princes; the Soul is its proper Seat and Temple, and there Men may worſhip their God as they pleaſe, without offending their Prince. For the Eſſence of Religious Worſhip conſiſts in nothing elſe but a grateful ſenſe and temper of Mind towards the Divine Goodneſs, and ſo can reſide in thoſe Faculties only that are capable of being affected

affected with Gratitude and Veneration: And as for all that concerns External Worſhip, 'tis no part of Religion it ſelf, but only an *Inſtrument* to expreſs the Inward Veneration of the Mind by ſome Outward Action or Poſture of the Body. Upon which account it is that the Divine Wiſdom has ſo little concern'd it ſelf to preſcribe any particular Forms of Divine Service; for though the Chriſtian Laws command us by ſome exteriour Signs to expreſs our Interiour Piety, yet they have no where ſet down any particular Expreſſions of Worſhip and Adoration. And indeed the Exteriour Significations of Honour being ſo changeable according to the variety of Cuſtoms and Places, there could be no particular Forms or Faſhions preſcribed: for ſo ſome would have been obliged to ſignifie their Honourable Sentiments of God by Marks of Scorn and Diſhonour; becauſe thoſe Faſhions and Poſtures which in ſome Places are Indications of Reſpect, are to others Signs of Contempt. So mad and Seditious is the Humour of thoſe Men, who brand all thoſe Forms of Divine Service, that are not expreſly enjoyn'd in the Holy Volume, with the odious

Titles of Superſtition and Will-worſhip; and ſo in one Sentence condemn all the Churches in the World, ſeeing there is not any one that has not Peculiar Rites and Cuſtoms of its own, that were never preſcribed nor practiſed by our Saviour or his Apoſtles. And in all Ages of the World God has left the management of his Outward Worſhip to the Diſcretion of Men, unleſs when to determine ſome particular Forms has been uſeful to ſome other purpoſes.

§ 5. The Ancienteſt and moſt Univerſally practiſed way of expreſſing Divine Worſhip and Adoration, was by Offering of Sacrifices; thoſe Firſt Ages of the World conceiving it a proper and natural way of acknowledging their entire Dependence upon, and Gratitude towards God, by publickly preſenting him with a portion of the Beſt and moſt Precious things they had: and God was well-pleaſed with them, not becauſe he at all delighted in the Blood of Bulls and Goats, but becauſe they were the *Pledges*, and *Significations* of a Grateful Mind. And yet this outward Expreſſion of Divine Worſhip, notwithſtanding its Univerſality

verſality and Antiquity, was only made choice of by good men as a fit way of intimating the pious and grateful Reſentments of their Minds, and cannot in the leaſt pretend to owe its Original to any *Divine Inſtitution*, ſeeing there appears not any ſhadow of a Command for it; and to ſay it was Commanded, though 'tis no where Recorded, is to take the Liberty of ſaying any thing without Proof or Evidence. That indeed Sacrifices became *Expiatory*, and that the Life of a Beaſt ſhould be accepted to redeem the Life of a Man, depended purely upon Poſitive Inſtitution, *Lev.* 17. 11. *For the life of the Fleſh is in the Blood, and I have given it to you upon the Altar to make an Atonement for your Souls; for 'tis the Blood that maketh an Atonement for the Soul.* Now it was a Matter of Meer Grace and Favour in God to exchange the Blood of a Beaſt for the Blood of a Man, which was really Forfeited for every Tranſgreſſion of that Law, that was Eſtabliſh'd upon no leſs *Sanction* than the Threatning of Death. In which Commutation of the Forfeiture was an equal mixture of the Divine Mercy and Severity, hereby he at

once ſignified his Hatred to Sin, and his Compaſſion to Sinners; in that though he might have remitted the Offence without exacting the Penalty, yet to ſhew his implacable Hatred againſt Sin, and withal the more to affright men from its Commiſſion, he would never remit its Guilt without ſome ſort of recompence and Expiation. But ſetting aſide this Poſitive Inſtitution of Sacrifices and Conſumptive Oblations, their Prime and Natural Uſe was only to expreſs the Significations of a Grateful Mind, as ſufficiently appears not only in the Religion of the Ancient Jews, but Heathens too. Among whom the Firſt and Earlieſt Footſteps of the Worſhip of God appear in their Harveſt Sacrifices and Oblations, when they preſented the Deity with a Parcel of their *Annual Returns* in acknowledgment of his Bounty and Providence: *Crying Harveſt-in* was their moſt Solemn, and moſt Ancient Feſtival, *Ariſt. Nicomach.* l. 8. c. 11. Αἱ γὰρ ἀρχαῖαι θυσίαι καὶ σύνοδοι φαίνονται γινόμεναι μετὰ τὰς ἐκ καρπῶν συγκομιδάς, οἷον ἀπαρχαί. *The Ancient Sacrifices and Feſtival Meetings appear to have been at firſt Inſtituted upon the Ingathering of their Fruits, ſuch were the Offerings*

Offerings of their First-Fruits: which was a decent and ſutable way of acknowledging their Homage and Gratitude to their Supreme Lord; and had they not been directed to a wrong Deity (as probably they were to the *Sun*) they might have been no leſs pleaſing to the Almighty, than *Cornelius*'s Alms and Devotions: becauſe God is no reſpecter of Perſons, but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.

§ 6. In the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation indeed God took ſpecial care to preſcribe the particular Rites and Ceremonies of his Worſhip, not ſo much by reaſon of the Neceſſity of the thing it ſelf, as becauſe of the Sottiſhneſs and Stupidity of that Age; in that all the Religions in the World were lamentably degenerated into the moſt ſordid and Idolatrous Superſtition, and the Jewiſh Nation were ſottiſhly addicted to the abſurd Cuſtoms of their Neighbours; and therefore the Divine Wiſdom enjoyn'd them the moſt contrary Uſages, as a Fence to keep them from paſſing over to the Religion of the Gentiles. But when Mankind

was grown up to a riper Understanding, and could discern that Religion was something else beside Customs and Ceremonies; then did God Cancel the Old Discipline of the Law, and by the Ministry of *Jesus Christ* establish'd a more Manly and Rational Dispensation; In which as he has been more solicitous to acquaint us with the Main and Fundamental Affairs of Religion, so has he scarce at all concern'd himself in Exteriour Rites and Significations (having Instituted only two, *viz.* The two Sacraments that are distinguish'd from all other Ceremonies, by their being *Federal* and peculiarly significative of the Covenant between God and Man, seal'd by the First, renewed and confirmed by the Second) but as for all other Rites and Ceremonies of External Service, he has left their entire Disposal to the Power and Discretion of the Church it self, knowing that as long as Men had Wit and Reason enough to manage the Civil Affairs of Common-wealths, they could not want Prudence to Judge what Circumstances were conducive to Order and Decency in Publick Worship. And if we take a Survey of all the Forms of Divine

Divine Service practiſed in the Chriſtian Church, there is not any of them can ſo much as pretend to be appointed in the Word of God, but depend on the Authority of the Civil Power in the ſame manner as all Cuſtoms and Laws of Civil Government do. And therefore to quarrel with thoſe Forms of Publick Worſhip, that are eſtabliſhed by Authority, only becauſe they are *Humane Inſtitutions*, is at once notorious Schiſm and Rebellion: For where a Religion is Eſtabliſh'd by the Laws, whoever openly refuſes Obedience, plainly rebels againſt the Government, Rebellion being properly nothing elſe but an open denial of Obedience to the Civil Power. Nor can Men of this Principle live Peaceably in any Church in Chriſtendom, in that there is not a Church in the World, that has not peculiar Rites and Cuſtoms and Laws of Government and Diſcipline.

§ 7. But of this I ſhall have occaſion to account elſewhere, and ſhall rather chuſe to obſerve here, from what I have diſcourſed of the Uſe and Nature of *Outward Worſhip*, the Prodigious Impertinency

pertinency of that clamour ſome men have for ſo many years kept up againſt the Inſtitution of *Significant Ceremonies*; when 'tis the only Uſe of Ceremonies, as well as all other outward Expreſſions of Religion, to be ſignificant: In that all Worſhip is only an Outward Sign of Inward Honour, and is indifferently perform'd either by Words or Actions; for reſpect may as well be ſignified by Deeds, and Poſtures, and Viſible Solemnities as by Solemn Expreſſions: Thus to approach the *Divine Majeſty* with ſuch Geſtures as are wont to betoken Reverence and Humility, is as proper a Piece of Worſhip, as to Celebrate his Greatneſs by Solemn Praiſes: And to offer Sacrifices and Oblations, was among the Ancients the ſame ſort of Worſhip as to return Thankſgivings, they being both equally outward Signs of Inward Love and Gratitude. And therefore there can be no more Exception againſt the Signification of Ceremonies than of Words, ſeeing this is the proper Office of both in the Worſhip of God.

And as all Forms, and Ceremonies, and Outward Actions of External Worſhip are in a manner equally Signi-

ficant,

ficant, ſo are they equally Arbitrary; only ſome happen to be more Univerſally Practiſed, and others to be Confined to ſome particular Times and Places: Kneeling, lying Proſtrate, being Bare-headed, Lifting up the Hands or Eyes, are not more naturally Significant of Worſhip and Adoration than putting off the Shoes, bowing the Head, or bending the Body; and if ſome are more generally uſed than others, that proceeds not from their Natural Significancy, but from Cuſtom and Caſual Preſcriptions: and to Bow the Body, when we mention the Name of *Jeſus*, is as much a natural ſignification of Honour to his Perſon, as Kneeling, or being Bare-headed, or lifting up the Hands or Eyes, when we offer up our Prayers to him. But if all Outward Actions become to betoken Honour by Inſtitution, then whatſoever Outward Signs are appointed by the Common-wealth, unleſs they are Cuſtomary Marks of Contempt, and ſo carry in them ſome *Antecedent Undecency*, are proper Signs of Worſhip; for if Actions are made Significant by Agreement, thoſe are moſt ſo whoſe ſignification is ratified by Publick Conſent.

§ 7. So

§ 8. So that all the Magistrates Power of instituting Significant Ceremonies, amounts to no more than a Power of Determining what shall or shall not be *Visible Signs of Honour*, and this certainly can be no more Usurpation upon the Consciences of men, than if the Sovereign Authority should take upon it self (as some Princes have done) to define the Signification of Words. For as Words do not naturally denote those things which they are used to represent, but have their Import Stampt upon them by consent and Institution, and and may, if Men would agree to it among themselves, be made Marks of Things quite contrary to what they now signifie: So the same Gestures and Actions are indifferently capable of signifying either Honour or Contumely; and therefore that they may have a certain and setled meaning, 'tis necessary their Signification should be Determined: and unless this be done either by some Positive Command, or Publick Consent, or some other way, there can be no such thing as Publick Worship in the World, in that its proper End and Usefulness is to

expres

expreſs Mens Agreement in giving Honour to the Divine Majeſty: and therefore unleſs the Signs by which this Honour is ſignified be Publick and Uniform, 'tis not Publick Worſhip, becauſe there is no Publick Signification of Honour. So far is it from being unlawful for Governours to define Significant Ceremonies in Divine Worſhip, that it is rather Neceſſary; in that unleſs they were defined, it would ceaſe to be Publick Worſhip: And when different men worſhip God by different Actions, according to their different Fanſies, 'tis not Publick, but Private Worſhip; in that they are not Publick, but Private Signs of Honour. So that Uniformity in the Outward Actions of Religious Worſhip is of the ſame Uſe, as certainty in the Signification of Words, becauſe otherwiſe they were no Publick Expreſſions of Honour. And therefore, to ſum up the whole Reſult of this Diſcourſe: If all Internal Actions of the Soul are beyond the Juriſdiction of Humane Power, if by them the ſubſtance of Religious Worſhip be perform'd, if all Outward Forms of Worſhip have no other Uſe, than only to be Inſtruments to expreſs

Inward

Inward Religion, and if the Signification of Actions be of the ſame Nature with that of Words; then when the Civil Magiſtrate takes upon him to determine any particular Forms of Outward Worſhip, 'tis, after all that hideous and ridiculous Noiſe that is raiſed againſt it, of no worſe Conſequence, than if he ſhould go about to define the Signification of all Words uſed in the Worſhip of God.

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

Of the Nature of all Actions Intrinſecally Evil, and their Exemption from the Authority of Humane Laws, againſt Mr. Hobs; *with a full confutation of his whole Hypotheſis of Government.*

The Contents.

NO Magiſtrate can Command Actions Internally Evil. The Reaſon hereof is, not becauſe Men are in any thing free from the Supreme Authority in Earth, but becauſe they are ſubject to a Superiour in Heaven. To take off all Obligations antecedent to Humane Laws, is utterly to deſtroy all Government. Mr. Hobs *his*

his Hypotheſis concerning the Nature and Original of Government propoſed. Its Abſurdity demonſtrated from its Inconſiſtency with the Natural Conſtitution of Things. The Principles of Government are to be Adapted, not to an Imaginary, but to the Real State of Nature. This Hypotheſis apparently denies either the Being of God, or the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of Providence. It irrecoverably deſtroys the Safety of all Societies of Mankind in the World. It leaves us in as miſerable Condition under the State of Government, as we were in his ſuppoſed Natural State of War. It Enervates all its own Laws of Nature, by Founding the Reaſon of their Obligation upon meer Self-Intereſt. Which falſe and abſurd Principle being removed, all that is Baſe, or peculiar in the whole Hypotheſis, is utterly Caſhier'd.

§ 1. WHen any thing that is Apparently and Intrinſecally Evil is the Matter of an Humane Law, whether it be of a Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Concern, here God is to

to be obeyed rather than Man: No Circumſtances can alter the Rules of Prime and Eſſential Rectitude, their goodneſs is Eternal and Unchangeable. And therefore in all ſuch Actions Diſobedience to Humane Laws is ſo far from being a Sin, that it becomes an indiſpenſable Duty. Where the good or evil of an Action is determined by the Law of Nature, no Poſitive Humane Law can take off its Morality; becauſe 'tis in it ſelf repugnant to the principles of right Reaſon, & by conſequence as unchangeable as that. And therefore if the Supreme Magiſtrate ſhould make a Law not to believe the Being of God or Providence, the Truth of the Goſpel, the Immortality of the Soul; that Law can no more bind, than if a Prince ſhould command a man to murther his Father, or to raviſh his Mother; becauſe the *Obligatory Power* of all ſuch Laws is antecedently reſcinded by a ſtronger and more Indiſpenſable Obligation. And thus has every Man a natural right to be Virtuous, and no Authority whatſoever can deny him the liberty of acting Virtuouſly without being guilty of the fouleſt Tyranny and Injuſtice: Not ſo

much becauſe Subjects are in any thing free from the Authority of the Supreme Power on Earth, as becauſe they are ſubject to a Superiour in Heaven; and they are only then excuſed from the duty of obedience to their Sovereign, when they cannot give it without Rebellion againſt God. So that it is not originally any right of their own, that exempts them from a ſubjection to the Sovereign Power in all things; but 'tis purely Gods right of governing his own Creatures, that Magiſtrates then invade, when they make Edicts to violate or controul his Laws.

And thoſe who would take off from the Conſciences of men all obligations antecedent to thoſe of humane Laws, inſtead of making the Power of Princes ſupreme, abſolute, and uncontroulable, they utterly enervate all their Authority, and ſet their Subjects at perfect liberty from all their Commands. For if we once remove all the antecedent obligations of Conſcience and Religion, men will be no further bound to ſubmit to their Laws, than only as themſelves ſhall ſee convenient; and if they are under no other reſtraint, it will be their wiſ-

wiſdom to rebel as oft as it is their Intereſt. In that the Laws of Superiours paſſing no Obligation upon the Conſciences of Subjects, they neither are, nor can be under any ſtronger Engagements to Subjection, than to preſerve themſelves from the Penalties and Inflictions of the Law; and ſo by conſequence may deſpiſe its Obligation, whenever they can hope to eſcape its puniſhment. Now, how muſt this weaken the Power, and ſupplant the Thrones of Princes, if every Subject may deſpiſe their Laws, or invade their Sovereignty, whenever he can hope to build his own Fortune upon their Ruines? How would it expoſe their Scepters to the continual Attempts of Rebels and Uſurpers, when every one, that has ſtrength enough to wreſt it out of his Princes hands, has Right and Title enough to hold it? What ſecurity could Princes have of their Subjects Loyalty, that will own their Power, as long as it ſhall be their intereſt; and when it ceaſes to be ſo, call it *Tyranny*? How ſhall they ever be ſecured by any Promiſes, Oaths, and Covenants of Allegiance, that have no other band but ſelf-ſecurity, or hope of Exemption from the Penalties

of the Law? Will not the moſt ſacred Bonds and Compacts leave them in as inſecure a condition as they found them in? In that Self-advantage would have kept their Subjects loyal and obedient without Oaths, and nothing elſe will do it with them; and therefore they can add no new Obligations to that of Intereſt: For if to perform their Covenants be advantageous, they are bound to perform them by the Laws of prudence and diſcretion without the Oath as much as with it; if diſadvantageous, no Oath can oblige them, in that Intereſt and Self-preſervation is the only enforcement of all their Covenants: and therefore when that Tye happens to ceaſe, their Obligation becomes Null and Void, and they may obſerve them if they pleaſe, and if they pleaſe break them.

§ 2. But the vanity and groundleſneſs of this opinion will more fully appear, by diſcovering the lamentable Foundation, on which it ſtands; and that is a late wild *Hypotheſis* concerning the Nature and Original of Government, which is briefly this: That the natural condition of Mankind is a *State and Poſture of War*

War of every man againſt every man, in that all men being born in a condition of equality, they have all an equal right to all things; and becauſe all cannot enjoy all, hence every man becomes an Enemy to every man: in which State of Hoſtility there is no way for any man to ſecure himſelf ſo reaſonable as *Anticipation*, that is, by Force or Wiles to maſter the perſons of all men he can, till he ſee no other Power great enough to endanger himſelf; ſo that there is no remedy but that in the State of Nature all men muſt be obliged to ſeek and contrive, in order to their own ſecurity, one anothers Deſtruction. But becauſe in this Condition Mankind muſt for ever groan under all the miſeries and calamities of War, therefore they have wiſely choſen by mutual conſent to enter into Contracts and Covenants of mutual truſt, in which every man has, in order to his own Security, been content to relinquiſh his natural and unlimited right to every thing; and hereby they enter into a ſtate of Peace and Government, in which every man engages by ſolemn Oath and Covenant to ſubmit himſelf to the Publick Laws in order to his own private

ſafety. So that, according to this Hypotheſis, there are no Rules of Right or Wrong antecedent to the Laws of the Common-wealth, but all men are at abſolute liberty to do as they pleaſe; and how cruel ſoever they may be to one another, they can never be injurious, there being nothing juſt or unjuſt but what is made ſo by the Laws of the Society, to which all its Members covenant to ſubmit when they enter into it.

This Hypotheſis, as odde as it is, is become the Standard of our *Modern Politicks*; by which men, that pretend to underſtand the real Laws of Wiſdom and Subtlety, muſt ſquare their Actions; and therefore is ſwallowed down, with as much greedineſs as an Article of Faith, by the Wild and Giddy People of the Age. And of the reality of it none can doubt but Fops and raw-brain'd Fellows, that underſtand nothing of the World, or the Complexion of Humane Nature. Now 'tis but labour in vain to go about to confute the Phantaſtick Theory of things, only by demonſtrating the Groundleſneſs of the Conceit; it being the faſhion and humour of thoſe men I have

have to do with, to embrace any Hypotheſis how precarious ſoever, if it do but ſerve the purpoſes of Baſeneſs and Irreligion: and therefore I ſhall not content my ſelf with barely proving the weakneſs of its Foundation, but ſhall confute and ſhame it too, by ſhewing it to be palpably falſe, abſurd, and miſchievous from theſe enſuing Conſiderations.

§ 3. Firſt then the Hypotheſis, which he lays as the Baſis of all his Diſcourſe, is infinitely falſe and abſurd: For what can be more incongruous, than to proceed upon the ſuppoſal of ſuch a ſtate of Nature as never was, nor ever ſhall be; and is ſo far from being ſutable to the natural frame of things, that 'tis abſolutely inconſiſtent with it? And though Philoſophers are ſo civil among themſelves (with how much reaſon I now determine not) as to allow one another the Liberty, when they frame Theories and Hypotheſes of things, to ſuppoſe ſome precarious Principles; yet are they never ſo fond as to grant ſuch *Fundamental Suppoſitions*, as are apparently falſe and incongruous, and repugnant to the *Real State* of things: or if any will

take upon them that unwarrantable liberty of Invention, yet however it would be monſtrouſly impertinent to lay down their own lamentable Fictions, as the fundamental Reaſons of the Truth, and reality of things. And yet with this groſs and inexcuſable abſurdity is this Hypotheſis moſt notoriouſly chargeable. For when it has once ſuppoſed (without ever attempting to prove it) that the *State of Nature* is a State of War, and that by Nature all men have a right to all things, and come into the World without any Obligations to mutual Juſtice and Honeſty, it from thence concludes: That in a bare State of Nature there can be no right and wrong; That what miſchiefs ſoever men may do to each other, they can do no injuries; That the firſt Reaſon and Foundation of all Natural Right is Self-preſervation, and that in purſuance of this Principle men enter into Societies, bind themſelves to an obſervance of the Laws of Juſtice and natural Equity by mutual Bonds and Covenants, and think themſelves engaged to obſerve them only in order to ſelf-intereſt. So that if we remove this πρῶτον ψεῦδος, this fundamental Falſhood, that the

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ſtate of Nature is a ſtate of War and Anarchy, all the ſubſequent Propoſitions will immediately appear to be as Groundleſs, as they are Unreaſonable; and there will not remain the leaſt ſhadow of Reaſon to believe private Intereſt, the only Reaſon of right and wrong, or the firſt and fundamental Law of Nature; and this Authors City will appear to ſtand upon no firmer Foundation than a Fable and a Falſhood; and his Hypotheſis ſo groſly abſurd and incongruous, as would be highly blameable in the contrivance of a Dramatick Plot.

But if, inſtead of conforming the Principles of Juſtice and Government to this falſe and imaginary ſtate of the World, we take a ſerious view of the true and real poſture of the Nature of things; the dictates of Reaſon that muſt naturally reſult from thence, will be as contrary to ſome of thoſe this Author hath aſſign'd, as the Natural State of things is to this imaginary one: Namely, that there was a firſt Cauſe of Humane Kind, and that this Firſt Cauſe is a Being endued with Goodneſs and Equity; and therefore that when he made Mankind, he deſign'd their Welfare and

and felicity; and by conſequence created them in ſuch a condition, in which they might acquire it. All men therefore having by the Divine Appointment a common Right and Title to Happineſs, which cannot be obtain'd without Society, nor Society ſubſiſt without mutual Aids of Love and Friendſhip, becauſe we are not ſelf-ſufficient, but ſtand in need of mutual aſſiſtances; from hence it follows, That as every man is obliged to act for his own good, ſo alſo to aim at the common good of Mankind, becauſe without this the natural Right that every individual man has to happineſs, cannot poſſibly be obtain'd; ſo that there will plainly ariſe from the Conſtitution of Humane Nature an *Eſſential Juſtice*, that demands of every man Offices of love and kindneſs to others as well as to himſelf; in that without this that Common welfare and happineſs, which Nature, or rather that Divine Providence that made it, deſign'd for all and every individual of Mankind, muſt become utterly unattainable. And hence the ſole Fountain of all the Miſchiefs and Miſeries in the World is exceſs of unreaſonable ſelf-love, and neglect of all other

intereſts but our own; and all ſuch, as ſeparate their own Coneerns from the Common Intereſt, are the profeſs'd Enemies of Mankind: and therefore 'tis the only aim of all the juſt Laws and wiſe Philoſophy in the world, to aſſign reaſonable allowances between Self-love and Society. And if all men would be juſt, and impartial between themſelves and the Publick, *i. e.* all others, there would be no uſe of Laws nor Judges, this being the only Office of Publick Juſtice, to balance every mans private intereſt.

Well then, becauſe there is an abſolute neceſſity that the Government of the World muſt be ſuited to, and eſtabliſhed upon the Natural Condition of Humane Nature; hence it is, that it is made as natural to the Being, as 'tis neceſſary to the preſervation of Mankind; and that as we cannot ſubſiſt, ſo neither can we be born out of Society, he that made us, having made this our natural Condition, that we could not poſſibly come into the World but under a ſtate of Government, all Children being actually as ſoon as born under the Power and Authority of their Parents: and therefore

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as Mankind cannot continue without Propagation, ſo neither can Propagation without Government; and to be a Subject is as natural upon being born, as to be a Man. Now 'tis certain, that that only can be accounted the State of Nature that was made and deſign'd by the Author of Nature (for if it be not ſuitable to that Order and Condition of things, that he has eſtabliſh'd, 'tis preternatural.) And therefore ſeeing he did not create Multitudes of men together out of each others Power, and in a State of War and Hoſtility, but begun the Race of Humane Kind in a *Single Perſon*, by whom the Community of Men was to be Propagated, that muſt be the State of Nature in which it was at firſt founded, and by which it is ſtill continued: But if men will feign ſuch an imaginary State of Nature as is utterly contradictory to the Real, and then, upon ſuch an unnatural Frame of Affairs, eſtabliſh our natural Rights; 'tis no wonder if they prove contrary to our Common Intereſts, ſeeing they are ſuited to a contrary State of things.

§ 4. Secondly, No man can ſeriouſly embrace

embrace this Hypotheſis, that does not firmly believe either (1.) That there never was any Author of Humane Nature, but that a multitude of men hapned by chance to ariſe like *Muſhromes* out of the Earth altogether, who out of diffidence and jealouſie one of another for want of acquaintance ſhun'd Society, and withdrew like all other Beaſts of Prey into Dens and ſecret retirements, where they lived poor and ſolitary as *Bats* and *Owls*, and ſubſiſted like *Vermine* by robbing and filching from one another; till finding this way of living lamentably unſafe and uneaſie, every man being always upon the guard againſt every man, and in continual fear and danger from the whole Community, they grew weary of this forlorn and comfortleſs way of living; and thence ſome that were more wiſe, or more cowardly than others, when they chanced to meet in their wild rangings after Prey, inſtead of belabouring one another with *ſnag-ſticks*, and beating out each others brains, made ſigns of Parley, and ſo began to treat of Terms of mutual Peace and Aſſiſtance, and ſo by degrees to win others into their Party, till they hearded together

together in ſmall Rendezvouſes, like the little Common-wealths of the ſavage *Americans*, which in proceſs of time grew up into larger Societies, from whence at length came the different Nations and Governments of the World. But if this fortuitous Original of humane Nature be too abſurd and ridiculous to be aſſerted, then (2.) It muſt be ſuppoſed, that there was a firſt Author and Creator of Mankind: and if there were, then whoever believes this Hypotheſis, muſt withal believe that he contrived things ſo ill, that unleſs his Creatures had by chance been more provident than himſelf, they muſt of neceſſity have periſh'd as ſoon as they were made; and therefore that the Well-being of the World is to be entirely attributed to mans Wit, and not to Gods Providence, who ſent his Creatures into it in ſuch a condition as ſhould oblige them to ſeek their own mutual ruine and deſtruction; ſo that had they continued in that ſtate of War he left them in, they muſt have lived and died like Gladiators, and have unavoidably periſh'd at one time or other by one anothers Swords; and therefore that Mankind owe the comfort of their

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lives not at all to their Creator, but entirely to themſelves; foraſmuch as the very Laws of Nature, whereby, according to this Hypotheſis, the World is preſerved, were not eſtabliſh'd by the Divine Providence; but are only ſo many Rules of Art, being, as all other Maximes of Prudence and Policy are, Inventions of humane Wit, and ſuppoſe man not in the natural ſtate and poſture of War, in which God left him, but in a preternatural one of his own contriving. But certainly the Deity that made us, if we ſuppoſe him good, made us not to be miſerable; for ſo we muſt unavoidably have been in a perpetual ſtate of War: and therefore to ſuppoſe he both made and left us in that condition, is directly to deny our Creators goodneſs. And then if we ſuppoſe him wiſe, we cannot imagine he would frame a Creation to deſtroy it ſelf; unleſs we can believe his only deſign was to ſport himſelf in the folly and madneſs of his Creatures, by beholding them by all the ways of force and fraud to conſpire their own mutual deſtruction: and therefore if the Creation of man were a product of the Divine Wiſdom

Wiſdom or Goodneſs, his natural State muſt have been a condition of Peace, and not ſuch a State of War that ſhould naturally tend to his miſery, ruine, and utter deſtruction.

§ 5. (3.) This Hypotheſis irrecoverably deſtroys the ſafety of all Societies of Mankind in the World: for if perſonal ſafety and private intereſt be the only Foundation of all the Laws of Nature or Principles of Equity, *i. e.* If men endeavour Peace, and enter into Contracts of mutual Truſt, if they invade not the Proprieties of others, if they think themſelves obliged to promote the good of the Society, if they ſubmit themſelves to the Laws of the Commonwealth, if they practiſe Juſtice, Equity, Mercy, and all other Virtues, if they refrain from Cruelty, Pride, Revenge, and all other Vices, only to ſecure their own perſonal ſafety and intereſt; then whenever this Obligation ceaſes, all the Ties to Juſtice and Equity, that derive all their Force and Reaſon from it, muſt alſo ceaſe; and when any ſingle Perſon can hope to advance his own private Intereſt by the ruine of the Publick

Publick, it will be lawful for him to effect it; and War, Rebellion, and injuries will be at leaſt as innocent as Faith, Juſtice, and Obedience; becauſe theſe are good only in order to private Intereſt, and therefore when thoſe chance to be as conducive to it, they will then be as juſt and lawful. So that this ſingle Principle does as effectually work the ſubverſion of all Government, as if men were taught the moſt profeſſed Principles of Rebellion, as, that all Government is Tyranny and Uſurpation; that his Majeſties poſſeſſion of the Crown is his beſt Title; that whoever has wit or ſtrength enough to wreſt his Scepter from him, has right to hold it. For as men of theſe and the like perſwaſions will never act them, but when opportunity invites; and will be obedient to any Government, till they can deſtroy it: So will thoſe other rebel, as ſoon as they think it their Intereſt. For when ever they can hope to mend their Fortunes by Rebellion, the ſame obligation, that reſtrain'd them from it, does now as forcibly invite them to it, that is ſelf-intereſt, *i. e.* they cannot but think Rebellion lawful, as oft as they think it ſafe. And there are no Villains

ſo mad or fooliſh as to attempt it upon other grounds. So that, though this Author has aſſign'd us ſome not unuſeful Laws of Nature, yet has he effectually enervated their force and uſefulneſs, by reſolving the reaſon of their obligation into ſelf-intereſt; and ſo laying the Fundamental Principles of all Injuſtice, as the only Foundation of all the Rules of Juſtice: For as 'tis the Nature and Office of Juſtice to maintain the Common Right of all, and to ſecure my Neighbours happineſs as well as my own; ſo the formal obliquity of all Injuſtice lies in purſuing of a private Intereſt without regard to the Common good of all and every member of the Society. And therefore if private Intereſt be the only reaſon and enforcement of the Laws of Nature, men will have no other Motive to obey their Conſtitutions, than what will as ſtrongly oblige to break them; *i.e.* if men are juſt and honeſt for no other reaſon than becauſe 'tis their Intereſt, then when 'tis their Intereſt, they may (and if they are wiſe will) be unjuſt and diſhoneſt. And ſo men that owne the Laws of Nature, upon this Principle may be Villains, in ſpight of all their reſtraints;

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and the moſt lewd and profligate Wretches will, as well as they, be juſt or unjuſt, as it ſerves their turns. For this Principle, that engages men to be honeſt only as long as they muſt, will as effectually oblige them to be Rogues as ſoon as they can.

§ 6. So that according to this Hypotheſis, Mankind is left in as ill a condition after they have by Pacts and Covenants united into Societies, and a State of Peace, as they were in their natural State of War. For all Covenants of mutual Truſt are (according to its own Rules) in the State of Nature invalid; becauſe under that men are under no obligations of Juſtice and Honeſty to one another, and have no other meaſure of their actions but their intereſt; and therefore as that might invite them in ſome circumſtances to enter into Bonds and Contracts, ſo it may in others to break them. So that in the State of Government all their Promiſes, Oaths, and Contracts will prove as ineffectual as in the State of Nature: Partly, becauſe the force of all Contracts, made in the State of Government, ariſeth from the validity of the

first Compact, that was made in the State of Nature; that is, in that ſtate in which it could have no validity; partly, Becauſe they have no other tye but that of ſelf-intereſt, and ſo can lay no other obligation upon us to obſerve them, than they might have done before. And therefore if Mankind be once ſuppoſed in this natural ſtate of War, they can never be delivered from it; and after they have enter'd into Covenants of Peace, they would remain as much as before in a poſture of War, and be ſubject to all the ſame dangers and miſeries, that would have annoyed them if they had continued in their natural ſtate. For if Juſtice and fidelity be not ſuppoſed to be the Law and Duty of our Natures, no Covenants are of power enough to bring us under any obligation to them.

Now, having thus clearly blown up the foundations of this Hypotheſis, 'twere but labour in vain to make particular enquiries into all the flaws and follies of its Superſtructures, ſeeing they muſt of neceſſity ſtand and fall together; for if its ſubſequent Propoſitions be coherently deduced from theſe Fundamental Princi-

Principles, all the evidence and certainty they can pretend to, depends on them; and therefore the Premiſſes being once convicted of falſhood, all pretences to truth in the concluſions muſt neceſſarily vaniſh. And if any of them happen to be true and rational, 'tis not by vertue of theſe, but other Principles. Thus though the Laws of Nature, he aſſigns, may be uſeful to the ends of Government and Happineſs of Mankind; yet, becauſe upon thoſe grounds, on which he aſſigns them, they would be no Laws, that alone is ſufficient evidence of the errour and vanity of his whole Hypotheſis; ſeeing how good ſoever they may be in themſelves, yet upon the Principles, and in the Method, in which he propoſes them, they are of no force. In that ſelf-intereſt being the only reaſon of their obligation, the Intereſts of Civil Society come thereby to be no better ſecured with, than without them: becauſe if they were not in force by vertue of any Compact, all men would chuſe to act according to them, when they thought it advantageous; and when they have the utmoſt force his Principles can give them, no man would think they

obliged him, when ever he apprehended them diſadvantageous. So that this malignant Principle of meer ſelf-intereſt running through the whole Syſteme, and twiſting it ſelf with every branch of his Morality, it does not only eat out, and enervate its native life and vigour, but withal envenoms their natural truth and ſoundneſs with its own malignity. Which Principle being removed, and that influence it hath on other parts of this Hypotheſis being prevented, and withal the Foundation on which it ſtands ruin'd, *viz.* his abſurd and imaginary *State of Nature*, we have perhaps caſhier'd all that is either baſe or peculiar in it, and reſtored the true accounts of natural Juſtice and right Reaſon, *viz.* That all men have a natural Right to Happineſs from the very deſign of their creation, that this cannot be acquired without mutual aids and friendſhips; and therefore right reaſon dictates, that every man ſhould have ſome concern for his Neighbour, as well as himſelf: becauſe this is made neceſſary to the welfare of the World by the natural ſtate of things, and by this mutual exchange of love and kindneſs men ſupport one another in the comforts of humane life.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

A Confutation of the Conſequences that ſome men draw from Mr. Hobs's *Principles in behalf of Liberty of Conſcience.*

The Contents.

How a belief of the Impoſture of all Religions is become the moſt powerful and faſhionable Argument for the Toleration of all. Though Religion were a Cheat, yet becauſe the World cannot be Govern'd without it; they are the moſt miſchievous Enemies to Government that tell the World it is ſo. Religion is uſeful or dangerous in a State, as the temper of mind it breeds is peaceable or turbulent. The dread of Inviſible Powers is not of it ſelf ſufficient to awe

people into ſubjection, but tends more probably to Tumults and Seditions. This largely proved by the ungovernableneſs of the Principles and Tempers of ſome Sects. Fanaticiſm is as natural to the Common people, as folly and ignorance; and yet is more miſchievous to Government, than Vice and Debauchery. How the Fanaticks of all Nations and Religions agree in the ſame Principles of Sedition. To permit different Sects of Religion in a Common-wealth, is only to keep up ſo many incurable pretences and occaſions of publick diſturbance. The corrupt paſſions and humours of men make Toleration infinitely unſafe. Toleration only cried up by oppreſt Parties, becauſe it gives them opportunity to overturn the ſettled frame of things. Every man that deſires indulgence is engaged by his Principles to endeavour Changes and Alterations. A bare indulgence of men in any Religion, different from the eſtabliſh'd way of Worſhip, does but exaſperate them againſt the State.

§ 1. And

§ 1. AND now the Reaſon, why I have thus far purſued this Principle, is, becauſe 'tis become the moſt powerful Patron of the Fanatick Intereſt; and a Belief of the indifferency, or rather Impoſture of all Religion, is now made the moſt effectual (not to ſay moſt faſhionable) Argument for *Liberty of Conſcience.* For when men have once ſwallowed this Principle, That Mankind is free from all obligations antecedent to the Laws of the Common-wealth, and that the Will of the Sovereign Power is the only meaſure of Good and Evil; they proceed ſuitably to its Conſequences, to believe, That no Religion can obtain the force of a Law, till 'tis eſtabliſh'd for ſuch by Supreme Authority; that the Holy Scriptures were not Laws to any man, till they were enjoyned by the Chriſtian Magiſtrate; that no man is under any obligation to aſſent to their Truth, unleſs the Governours of the Common-wealth require it; and that ſetting aſide their Commands, 'tis no ſin to believe our Bleſſed Saviour a villanous and lewd Impoſtor; and that, if

if the Sovereign Power would declare the *Alcoran* to be Canonical Scripture, it would be as much the Word of God as the four Goſpels. *Leviath.* p.3. c.33. *For if Sovereigns in their own Dominions are the ſole Legiſlators, then thoſe Books only are Canonical, that is Law, in every Nation, which are eſtabliſhed for ſuch by the Sovereign Authority.* So that all Religions are in reality nothing but Cheats and Impoſtures, and at beſt but ſo many Tales of Imaginary and Inviſible Powers, Publickly allowed and encouraged, to awe the Common People to Obedience. *Leviath.* p.1. c.12. *Who are betrayed into it by theſe four Follies, A falſe Opinion of Ghoſts and immaterial Subſtances, that neither are, nor ever can be; Ignorance of Second Cauſes, Devotion towards what men groundleſly fear; And miſtaking things Caſual for Divine Prognoſticks.* In brief, all Religion is nothing but a Cheat of Policy, and was at firſt invented by the Founders and Legiſlators of Common-wealths, and by them obtruded upon the credulous Rabble for the Ends of Government. And therefore, though Princes may wiſely make uſe of the Fables of Religion to ſerve their own turns upon

upon the ſilly Multitude, yet 'tis below their Wiſdom to be ſeriouſly concern'd themſelves for ſuch Fooleries; ſo that, provided their ſubjects will befool themſelves with any one Impoſture, 'tis not material which they ſingle out; in that all Religions equally oblige to the belief of Inviſible Powers, which is all that is requiſite to the Deſigns of Policy. And as long as a Prince can keep up any apprehenſions of Religion in the minds of his Subjects, 'tis no Policy to diſoblige and exaſperate any of them, by intereſſing his Power for one Party more than another, and by forcing all other Sects againſt their own Inclinations to conform their Belief to the Perſwaſions of one Faction; but rather to endear them all to himſelf, by indulging them their Liberty in their different Follies: and ſo he may with more eaſe ſecure his Government by abuſing all, and yet diſobliging none.

§ 2. In anſwer to this Objection, 'tis not material to my preſent Purpoſe largely to examine & refute theſe Wild and extravagant Pretences, by aſſerting the Truth and Divine Authority of Religion,

Religion, and giving a rational account of the Grounds and Principles, on which it ſtands: only let me obſerve that this Diſcourſe lies under no leſs prejudice than this, That if any of the Principles of Religion be true, then is all theſe mens Policy falſe: But waving this too great advantage, I ſhall content my ſelf only to diſcover of what noiſom and pernicious conſequence ſuch Principles are to the Common-wealth, though it were granted that all Religion were nothing but Impoſture. And this I ſhall do (without reminding the Reader how I have already prevented this Objection in the firſt part of the Diſcourſe, when I ſhew'd what good or bad Influence upon the State mens perſwaſions about Religion have) by theſe four enſuing Conſiderations.

First, Then methinks his Majeſty is bound to con theſe men thanks for endeavouring to render the truth of Religion ſuſpected, and to poſſeſs mens minds with apprehenſions of its being falſe; whereby they effectually rob him of the beſt ſecurity of his Crown, and ſtrongeſt inducements of obedience to his Laws. There being for certain nothing ſo abſolutely

abſolutely neceſſary to the reverence of Government, the peace of Societies, and common Intereſts of mankind, as a ſenſe of Conſcience and Religion: This is the ſtrongeſt Bond of Laws, and only ſupport of Government; without it the moſt abſolute and unlimited Powers in the World muſt be for ever miſerably weak and precarious, and lie always at the mercy of every Subjects paſſion and private Intereſt. For when the obligations of Conſcience and Religion are caſhier'd, men can have no higher inducements to Loyalty and Obedience, than the conſiderations of their own private Intereſt and ſecurity; and then wherever theſe happen to fail, and Intereſt and advantage invite to diſobedience, men may do as they pleaſe: And when they have power to ſhake off Authority, they have right too; and a proſperous Uſurper ſhall have as fair a Title to his Crown as the moſt lawful Prince; all Government will be founded upon force and violence, and Kings nothing but terrible men with long Swords. But when the ties of Conſcience are ſuperinduced upon thoſe of Secular Intereſt, this extends the Power of Princes to the

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hearts of their Subjects, and ſecures them as much from the very thoughts, as attempts of Treaſon. For nothing ſo ſtrongly influences the minds of men, or ſo authoritatively commands their paſſions and inclinations, as Religion; foraſmuch as no fears are (not only to the conſiderate part of Mankind, but to the ruder ſort) ſo vehement as thoſe of Hell, nor hopes ſo active as thoſe of Heaven: and therefore the Commands of Religion being back'd with ſuch mighty ſanctions, they muſt needs have infinitely more force to awe or allure the minds of men to a compliance, than any Secular Intereſts. Whereas thoſe men that think themſelves above the Follies of Conſcience, and either believe or regard not the evils threatned hereafter (an attainment to which theſe our *modern Politicians* do not bluſh to pretend, though it be but an odde piece of Policy openly to owne and proclaim it) muſt make their preſent Intereſt the Rule and meaſure of all their actions; and can have no other obligation to obey their lawful Superiours in what they command, than they have to diſobey them, *viz.* their own ſecurity and ſelf-preſervation. Whereas

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if theſe men lived under the reſtraints of Conſcience, and the ſerious apprehenſions of Religion, and believed the Laws of their Prince to be bound upon them by the Laws of God, and that under the threatnings of everlaſting miſery; their Loyalty would be tied upon them by all that men can either hope or fear, and they would have all the engagements to obedience that the ſerious reflections upon a happy or miſerable Eternity could lay upon them. But if the Principles of Government have ſo eſſential a dependence upon thoſe of Religion, if nothing be powerful enough to ſecure obedience but the hopes and fears of another life, if all humane Laws have their main force and efficacy from the apprehenſions of Religion, if Oaths, Promiſes, and Covenants, and whatſoever elſe whereby Civil Societies are upheld, are made firm by nothing but the bonds of Religion; then let Authority judge, how much it is beholden to thoſe men, who labour to bring it into Publick Diſreputation, and to poſſeſs their Subjects with an opinion of its falſhood: whereby they not only ſet them looſe from their Authority, but

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enrage them againſt it, by perſwading them they are governed by Cheats and Impoſtures, and that the Magiſtrate builds his Dominion upon their folly and ſimplicity, there being nothing more hateful to Mankind than to be impoſed upon: So that though Religion were a Cheat, they are apparently the greateſt Enemies to Government, that tell the World it is ſo.

§ 3. But ſecondly, Nothing more concerns the Intereſt of the Civil Magiſtrate, than to take care, what particular Doctrines of Religion are taught within his Dominions; becauſe ſome are peculiarly advantageous to the ends of Government, and others as naturally tending to its diſturbance: Some incline the minds of men to candour, moderation, and ingenuity, and work them to a gentle and peaceable temper, by teaching humility, charity, meekneſs, and obedience: Now 'tis the Intereſt of Princes to cheriſh and propagate ſuch Doctrines among their Subjects, that will make them not only quiet, but uſeful in the Common-wealth. But others there are that infect the minds of men with

with pride, peeviſhneſs, malice, ſpight, and envy; that incline them to delight in detracting from Princes, and ſpeaking reproachfully of Government, and breed in them ſuch reſtleſs and ſeditious tempers, that 'tis next to an impoſſibility for any Prince to pleaſe or oblige them. Now, as for ſuch perverſe and arrogant Sects of men, it certainly concers Governours to ſuppreſs them as ſo many Routs of Traytors and Rebels.

Religion then is either uſeful or dangerous in a Common-wealth, as the temper of mind it breeds is peaceable or turbulent: and as there is nothing more ſerviceable to the Intereſts of Government, ſo there is nothing more miſchievous: and therefore nothing more concerns Princes, than to take care what Doctrines are taught within their Dominions. For ſeeing Religion has, and will have the ſtrongeſt influence upon the minds of men; when that renders them averſe and troubleſom to Government, 'tis that all the Power nor Policy in the World can keep them peaceable, till ſuch perſwaſions are rooted out of their minds by ſeverity of Laws and Penalties. And, as long as men think

themſelves obliged, upon pain of damnation, to Diſobedience and Sedition, not any Secular threatnings and inflictions are of force enough to bridle the *Exorbitances of Conſcience.* There is not any vice ſo incident to the Common People as *Superſtition*, nor any ſo miſchievous. 'Tis infinitely evident from the Hiſtories and Records of all Ages and Nations, that there is nothing ſo vicious or abſurd but may paſs for Religion, and (what is worſe) the more wild and giddy Conceits of Religion are ever ſuckt in by the multitude with the greateſt paſſion and eagerneſs; and there is no one thing in the World ſo difficult, as to bring the Common People to true Notions of God and his Worſhip; inſomuch that 'tis no Paradox to affirm, That Religion (*i.e.* what is miſtaken for it) has been one of the greateſt Principles of miſchief and wickedneſs in the World. And if ſo, then certainly nothing requires ſo much care and prudence in the Civil Magiſtrate, as *its* due conduct and management. So that the dread of *Inviſible Powers* is of it ſelf no more ſerviceable to awe the people into ſubjection, then to drive them into

into Tumults and Confuſions; and if it chance to be accompanied (as it eaſily may) with tumultuous and ſeditious perſwaſions, 'tis an invincible obligation to Villany and Rebellion. And therefore it muſt needs above all things concern Princes, to look to the Doctrines and Articles of mens Belief; ſeeing 'tis ſo great odds that they prove of dangerous conſequence to the publick Peace: and in that caſe, the apprehenſions of a Deity, and a World to come, makes their danger almoſt irreſiſtible.

Sect. 4. There are ſome Sects whoſe Principles, and ſome perſons whoſe tempers will not ſuffer them to live peaceable in any Common-wealth. For what if ſome men believe, That if Princes refuſe to reform Religion themſelves, 'tis lawful for their *Godly Subjects* to do it, and that by violence and force of Arms? What if they believe, That Princes are but Executioners of the *Decrees* of the *Presbytery*; and that in caſe of diſobedience to their Spiritual Governours, they may be Excommunicated, and by conſequence Depoſed? What if they believe, That Dominion

is founded in Grace; and therefore that all *wicked Kings* forfeit their Crowns, and that it is in the power of the *People of God* to beſtow them where they pleaſe? And what if others believe, That to puruſe their ſucceſs in villany and Rebellion is to follow Providence; and that when the Event of War has deliver'd up Kings into their Power, then not to depoſe or murther them, were to ſlight the Guidance of *Gods Providential Diſpenſations*? Are not theſe, and the like innocent Propoſitions (think you) mightily conducive to the peace and ſettlement of Common-wealths? Such Articles of Faith as theſe cannot but make brave and obedient Subjects, and he muſt needs be a glorious and powerful Prince, where ſuch conceits are the main ingredients of his Subjects Religion. Let any man ſhew me, what Doctrines could have been more unluckily contrived to diſturb Government than theſe. And if men would ſtudy on purpoſe to frame and model a *Rebellious Faith*, theſe muſt have been their *Fundamental Articles*: and yet 'tis ſufficiently known where they have been both believed and practiſed. But further,

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Is there not a ſort of *Melancholy Religioniſts* in the World, whoſe very Genious inclines them to Quarrels and Exceptions againſt the State, and management of Publick Affairs? There is nothing ſo malepart as a Splenetick Religion; the inward diſcontent and uneaſineſs of mens own minds maintains it ſelf upon the faults and miſcarriages of others: and we may obſerve, how this humour is ever venting it ſelf in ſighs and complaints for the badneſs of the times (*i. e.* in effect of the Government) and in telling and aggravating little ſtories, that may reflect upon the wiſdom and ability of their Superiours. 'Tis impoſſible to pleaſe their fretful and anxious minds; the very delights and recreations of the Court ſhall ſtir their envy, and the vanities of the great Ones grieve and wound their tender Souls. However Princes behave themſelves, they can never win upon the affections of theſe people; their very proſperity ſhall diſoblige them, and they are ready upon all occaſions to bring them to *Account* for their miſdemeanours: And if any of the *Grandees* happen to be diſcontented, they have here a Party ready formed for the

purpoſe, to revenge their injury, and bring *evil Counſellors*, that ſeduce the King, *to Juſtice*. And 'tis not impoſſible but there may be a ſort of proud and haughty men among us (not over-well affected to Monarchick Government) who, though they ſcorn, yet patronize this humour, as a check to the inſolence and preſumption of Princes. Again, Are there not ſome whole Sects of men, all whoſe Religion is made up of nothing but paſſion, rancour, and bitterneſs? All whoſe Devotion is little better than a male-contentedneſs, their Piety than a ſanctified fury, and their zeal than a proud and ſpightful malice; and who, by the Genius of their Principles, are brought infinitely and irrecoverably under the power of their paſſions; Τοιγὰρ πρεσβυτέρουσιν ἐριννύες ἀϊδὴν ἔπονται. Now, nothing imports Governours ſo much as to manage mens paſſions; in that 'tis theſe, rather than our appetites, that diſturb the World. A perſon that is debaucht and intemperate is indeed uſeleſs to the Common-wealth, but he that is turbulent and paſſionate is dangerous. But then when paſſion is fired with religious zeal, nothing can temper its

its outragious and Fanatick heats; but it works the minds of men into rancour and bitterneſs, and drives them into all manner of ſavage and inhumane practices. Princes have never found any thing ſo reſtive and ungovernable, as *Sectarian Madneſs*; no malice ſo ſpightful and implacable, as the zeal of a *Godly Party*; nor any rage ſo fierce and mercileſs, as *ſanctified Barbariſm*. All the ancient Tyranny has in ſome places been outdone by a *thorough-godly Reformation*: zeal for the Glory of God has often turn'd whole Nations into Shambles, fill'd the World with continual Butcheries and Maſſacres, and fleſh'd it ſelf with ſlaughters of Myriads of Mankind. And when men think their paſſions warranted by their Religion, how is it poſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe? For this obliges them by their greateſt hopes and fears to act them to the higheſt: and 'tis eaſie to imagine what calm and peaceable things thoſe men muſt be, who think it their duty to enforce and enrage their paſſions with the obligations of Conſcience. And yet alas! How few are they, who have wiſdom enough to keep their zeal clean from theſe ſowre

and crabbed mixtures? The generality of men are ſcarce ſenſible of their ſpiritual wickedneſſes; and 'tis obſervable, That in all Ages, and all Religions of the world, few people have taken notice of them beſide their Wiſe men and Philoſophers. And even among the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity it ſelf, notwithſtanding that our Religion has made ſuch ſpecial proviſions againſt all Exceſſes of Paſſion, and eſtabliſh'd Love, Charity, Moderation, Patience, Candor, and Ingenuity, as its Prime, and Fundamental Duties; yet the Spirit of meekneſs and humility ſoon decayed, with its Primitive and Apoſtolical Profeſſors; and within a few Centuries of years the Church was over-run with ſome Sects of men, much of the ſame temper with ſome of our *Modern Saints*. So that even in true and innocent perſwaſions 'tis neceſſary to aſſwage the diſtempers and indiſcretions of a forward zeal: The giddy multitude judge weakly, fancy ſtrongly, and act paſſionately; and, unleſs reſtrain'd by wary and ſober Laws, will drive on ſo furiouſly in a good cauſe, till they run their Religion into Folly and Faction, and themſelves into tumults

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and riotous proceedings. What *Socrates* once ſaid of Vertue, That when it is not conducted by prudence, it is but Pedantry, and a phantaſtick thing, is much more true of Religion; which, when it wants the guidance and ornament of this Vertue, may be folly, or madneſs, or any thing rather than it ſelf. In brief, *Fanaticiſm* is both the greateſt, and the eaſieſt vice that is incident to Religion; 'tis a Weed that thrives in all Soils, and there is the ſame *Fanatick Spirit*, that mixes it ſelf with all the Religions in the World. And 'tis as natural to the Common People, as the proud, or ignorant, or perverſe, or factious, or ſtubborn, or eager, or paſſionate: for when ever any of theſe vices or follies are twiſted with mens apprehenſions of Religion, they naturally work, and ferment their minds into a boyſterous and tumultuary zeal. And yet how infinitely difficult it is to cure the *Common Heard* of theſe vices, the Experience of all Ages is too great a demonſtration: ſo that there is nothing ſo apparently neceſſary, or difficult, as to govern the vulgar Rout in their conceptions of Religion; ſeeing 'tis ſo natural for them both to mix and heighten,

heigthen, yes, and ſanctifie their paſſions with their Conſciences. And from hence it is, that though the Fanaticks in all Nations may diſagree in the objects and matters of their Superſtition, according to the different Cuſtoms of their Country, and variety of their Educations; yet as for their tendency to diſturbance and Sedition in the State, 'tis in all places the ſame to all intents and purpoſes: And thoſe unquiet Sects, that have often diſturb'd, and ſometimes ſubverted whole Kingdoms in *Africa*, if they had hapned to have been born in *Europe*, would have done the ſame here; where though their Religion might have been different, yet would their *Genius* have been the ſame, as riſing from the ſame *Conjunction* of Conſcience and Paſſion. And therefore it cannot but be a wonder to any man, that is acquainted with the Experience of former Ages, to ſee Governours, after ſo many warnings, ſo inſenſible of this miſchief: and however they may think themſelves unconcern'd to reſtrain the opinions of any diſſenting Sect, as being perhaps but fooliſh and inconſiderable in themſelves; yet nothing can more highly concern them than to pro-

provide againſt their inclinations, as being generally of a ſad and dangerous conſequence to the State. And this at preſent may ſuffice to evince, How much it concerns Authority to look to the particular Principles and Inclinations of every Sect; and to prove, That the meer Belief of *Inviſible Powers*, is ſo far from being Religion enough to awe men to obedience; that unleſs it be temper'd with a due ſenſe of vertue, and managed with ſpecial prudence and diſcretion, it rather tends to make the rude multitude more head-ſtrong and ungovernable.

Sect. 5. Thirdly, To permit different Sects of Religion in a Common-wealth, is only to keep up ſo many pretences and occaſions for *publick Diſturbance*; the Factions of Religion are ever the moſt ſeditious, and the leſs material their difference, the more implacable their hatred: as the *Turks* think it more acceptable to God, to kill one *Perſian* than ſeventy Chriſtians. No hinge ſo vehemently alienates mens affections, as variety of judgment in matters of Religion; here they cannot diſagree, but they muſt quar-

quarrel too: and when Religion divides mens minds, no other Common Intereſt can unite them; and where zeal diſſolves friendſhip, the ties of Nature are not ſtrong enough to reconcile it. Every Faction is at open defiance with every Faction, they are always in a ſtate and poſture of War, and engaged in a mortal and irreconcileable hatred againſt each other. When ever men part Communion, every Party muſt of neceſſity eſteem the other impious and Heretical; in that they never divide but with pretences, that they could not agree without being guilty of ſome ſin or other, as Blaſphemy, or Idolatry, or Superſtition, or Hereſie, or the like: For all agree in this Principle, *That peace ought always to be preſerved, where it can without offending God, and offering violence to Conſcience*: and therefore they cannot but look upon one another, as lying under the Divine Wrath and Diſpleaſure, and conſequently, in a damnable condition: and then are both Parties engaged, as they love God, and the Souls of men, to labour one another ruine. And when the Party is form'd, and men are *liſted* into it by chance and Education,

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the diſtinguiſhing Opinion of the Party is to them the moſt material and fundamental Article of their Belief; and ſo they muſt account of all that either diſowne or deny it, as of Heathens, Infidels, and Enemies to the Faith. Beſides that, all men are naturally more zealous about the Principles in which they differ, than about thoſe in which they agree. Oppoſition whets and ſharpens their zeal, becauſe it endangers the truths they contend for; whereas thoſe that are not oppoſed are ſecure and out of hazard of being ſtifled by the adverſe Party, that is concern'd equally with themſelves for their preſervation. And hence we ſee, by daily Experience, that men, who are tame and cool enough in the Fundamentals of Religion, are yet utterly impatient about their own unlearned and impertinent Wranglings, and lay a greater ſtreſs upon the Speculations of their own Sect, than upon the Duties of an abſolute and indiſpenſable neceſſity; only becauſe thoſe are contradicted by their Adverſaries, and theſe are not. Well then, ſeeing all diſſenting Parties are poſſeſs'd with a furious and paſſionate zeal to promote their own perſwaſions, and ſeeing they

they are perſwaded that their zeal is in *God's Cauſe*, and againſt the Enemies of *God's Truths*; How vain is it to expect Peace and Settlement in a Commonwealth, where their Religion keeps men in a ſtate of War, where zeal is arm'd againſt zeal, and Conſcience encounters Conſcience, where the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls lies at ſtake, and where *Curſe ye Meroz* is the Word of both Parties? So that whatſoever projects fanſiful men may propoſe to themſelves, if we conſider the paſſions of humane Nature, as long as Differences and Competitions in Religion are kept up, it will be impoſſible to keep down mutual hatreds, jealouſies, and animoſities; and ſo many divided Churches as there are in a State, there will ever be ſo many *different Armies*, who, though they are not always in actual fighting, are always in a diſpoſition to it.

Beſide, where there are divided Intereſts of Religion in the ſame Kingdom, how ſhall the Prince behave himſelf towards them? If he go about to ballance them againſt one another, this is the ready way to forfeit his Intereſt in them all;

and

and whilſt he ſeems concern'd for no Party, no Party will be really concern'd for him, every one having ſo much eſteem for it ſelf, as to think it ought to enjoy more of his favour and countenance than any other. And withal 'tis an infinite trouble and difficulty to poiſe them ſo equally, but that one Party ſhall grow more ſtrong and numerous than the reſt; and then there is no appeaſing their zeal, till it has deſtroyed and ſwallowed up all the weaker Intereſts. But ſuppoſe he be able to manage them ſo prudently, as always to keep the ballance equal; he does thereby but keep up ſo many Parties, that are ready form'd to joyn with any emergent Quarrels of State: and whenever the *Grandees* fall out, 'tis but *heading* one of theſe, and there is an *Army*. And let men but reflect upon all the late Civil Wars, and Rebellions of *Chriſtendom*, and then tell me, which way they could either have been commenced or continued, had it not been for different Factions of Religion.

If he ſide with one Party, and by his favour mount it above the reſt, that not only diſcontents, but combines all the other diſſenting Factions into an united oppoſi-

oppoſition againſt his own: and it becomes their common Intereſt, to work and contrive its ruine; its proſperity does but exaſperate the competition of all its Rivals into rage and indignation: and as ſucceſs makes it ſelf more ſecure in its ſettlement, ſo it makes them more reſtleſs and induſtrious to overturn it. No Party can ever be quiet or content as long as 'tis under any other, but will ever be heaving and ſtruggling, to diſmount the Power that keeps it down: and therefore we find that all Diſſenters from the eſtabliſh'd frame of things are always aſſaulting it with open violence, or undermining it by ſecret practices, and will hazard the State, and all, to free themſelves from oppreſſion; and oppreſs'd they are, as long as they are the *weaker Party*. And therefore we never find this way of Toleration put in practice under any Government, but where other Exigences of State required and kept up a ſtanding Army; and by this means 'tis not ſo difficult to prevent the Broils and Contentions of Zeal: but this is only a more violent way of governing mens Conſciences, and inſtead of reſtraining them by *Laws* & *Penalties*, it

it does the ſame thing with *Forts* and *Cittadels*: So that unleſs we are willing to put our ſelves to the expence and hazard of keeping up *ſtanding Forces*, indulgence to diſſenting Zealots does but expoſe the State to the perpetual ſquabbles and Wars of Religion. And we may as well ſuppoſe all men to be wiſe and honeſt, and upon that account cancel all the Laws of Juſtice and Civil Government, as imagine, where there are divided Factions in Religion, that men will be temperate and peaceable in the enjoyment of their own conceits, and not diſturb the publick Peace to promote and eſtabliſh them; when 'tis ſo well known from the experience of all Ages, that nothing has ever been a more effectual Engine to work popular Commotions, than Changes and Reformations in Religion.

Sect. 6. So that though the State think it ſelf unconcern'd to reſtrain mens Perſwaſions and Opinions, yet methinks they ſhould be a little concern'd to prevent the Tumults and Diſturbances that naturally ariſe from their propagation. And could it be ſecured, That if all men

were indulged their liberty, they would uſe it modeſtly, and be ſatisfied with their own freedom, then (I confeſs) Toleration of all Opinions would not be of ſo fatal and dangerous conſequence; as if all men were as wiſe and honeſt as *Socrates*, they might, as well as he, be their own Law, and left entirely to their own Liberty, as to all the entercourſes and tranſactions of Humane life. But alas! this is made infinitely impoſſible, from the corrupt Paſſions and Humours of Men: All Sects ever were, and ever will be, fierce and unruly to inlarge their own Intereſts, invading or ſupplanting whatever oppoſes their increaſe, and will all certainly conſpire the Ruine of that Party that prevails and triumphs over the reſt; every Faction ever apprehending it its due to be Supreme: and there will ever be a neceſſity of *Reformation*, as long as all Factions are not *uppermoſt*; and it will be crime enough in any one Party, to be ſuperiour to another. So that if all our diſſenting Sectaries were allowed their entire liberty, nothing can be expected (eſpecially from people of their complexion) but that they ſhould all plot together againſt the preſent Eſta-

bliſhment

bliſhment of the Church; every *Combination* being fully perſwaded of its worthleſneſs in compariſon to it ſelf: for unleſs they had apprehended their own way more excellent, they had never divided from ours. Beſide that 'tis a fundamental Principle that runs through all their Sects, That they are bound under pain of Eternal Damnation to labour their utmoſt to eſtabliſh the Worſhip of God in in its greateſt Purity and Perfection; and withal apprehending that way now eſtabliſhed by Law defective and ſuperſtitious, they cannot but be bound in Conſcience to endeavour its utter ruine and ſubverſion; which Deſign when they have once compaſſed, they entertaining the ſame Opinion of each other as they do of us, they will turn their Weapons upon themſelves, and with as much Zeal contrive each others deſtruction as they did ours: and the reſult of all will be, That the Commonwealth will be eternally torn with inteſtine Quarrels and Commotions, till it grow ſo wiſe again as to ſuppreſs all Parties but one; that is, till it return to that wiſdom and Prudence from whence it parted by *Toleration*.

And therefore nothing can be more vulgarly obſervable, than that though all Parties, whilſt under the Power of a more prevailing intereſt, have cried up Toleration, as the moſt effectual inſtrument to ſhake and diſſettle the preſent frame of things; yet have they no ſooner effected their Deſign, than they have immediately put in to ſcramble for the Supremacy themſelves; which if they once obtain, they have ever uſed with as much rigour and ſeverity upon all Diſſenters, as they ever felt themſelves. So that this Principle of Liberty of Conſcience much reſembles that of community of Goods; for as thoſe men cry up equality of Eſtates, as a moſt reaſonable piece of Juſtice, that have but a ſmall ſhare themſelves; yet whenever their Pretence ſucceeds, and they have advanced their own Fortunes, and ſerved their own turns, they are the firſt that ſhall then cry it down, and oppreſs their inferiours with more cruelty than ever themſelves felt whilſt in a lower Station; ſo do thoſe whoſe private perſwaſions happen to croſs the publick Laws, eaſily pretend to Liberty of Conſcience. One muſt yield; and becauſe their ſtubborn

born Zeal ſcorns to bend to the Commands of Authority, theſe muſt be forced to give place to that: So that when Conſcience and Authority happen to encounter, all the Diſpute is, Which ſhall have moſt force in Publick Laws, whether my own or my Princes opinion? But how plauſibly ſoever this Notion may be pleaded by men out of Power, 'tis ever laid aſide as ſoon as ever they come into it; and the greateſt pretenders to it when oppreſs'd, are always the greateſt Zealots againſt it, as ſoon as it has mounted themſelves into Power, as well knowing it to be the moſt effectual Engine to overturn any ſettled Frame of things.

In brief, 'Tis *Reformation* men would have, and not *Indulgence*; which they only ſeek to gain ground for the working of their *Mines*, and planting of their *Engines*, to ſubvert the eſtabliſhed ſtate of things. For if we demand, wherefore they would be born with in their Diſſentions from our way of Worſhip? They anſwer, Becauſe they cannot conform to it in Conſcience, *i. e.* becauſe they apprehend it ſinful; for otherwiſe they muſt think themſelves guilty of the

moſt intollerable Schiſm and Rebellion, to create Factions and Diviſions in a Common-wealth, when they may avoid it without any violence to their Conſciences: But if they apprehend our way of Worſhip upon any account ſinful, then are they plainly obliged in Conſcience to root it out, as diſpleaſing to Almighty God, and in its ſtead to plant and eſtabliſh their own. And now if this be the Iſſue of this Principle, let Magiſtrates conſider how fatal and hazardous alterations in Religion have ever been to the Common-wealth. They cannot pluck a Pin out of the Church, but the State immediately ſhakes and totters; and if they will allow their Subjects the liberty of changing and innovating in Religion (as it is apparent from the Premiſſes they muſt, if they allow them their pretences to liberty of Conſcience) they do but give them advantages for Eternal Popular Commotions and Diſturbances.

Sect. 7. Fourthly, A bare Indulgence of Men in the free exerciſe of any Religion, different from the publick profeſſion, can lay no obligation upon the Party. Perhaps when the rigour of a Law, under which

which they have ſmarted a while, is at firſt relaxed, this indeed they may at preſent take for a kindneſs, becauſe 'tis really a favour in compariſon to their former Condition; and therefore as long as the memory of that remains freſh upon their minds, it may poſſibly affect them with ſome grateful Reſentments. But alas! theſe affections quickly vaniſh, and then what before was *Favour*, is now become *Juſtice*; and their Prince did but reſtore them to their juſt and lawful rights, when he took off his *Tyrannical Laws* and *Impoſitions* from the Conſciences of his beſt Subjects. While thoſe unjuſt Laws were in force, he oppreſs'd and perſecuted the *People of God*; and therefore when he cancels them, all the kindneſs he is guilty of, is only to repent of his Tyranny and Perſecution, which is no favour, and by conſequence no Obligation. And (what is more conſiderable) all the diſſenting Parties he permits, and does not countenance, he diſobliges. Is this all the kindneſs (ſay they) he can afford the *Godly*, not to perſecute them by Law and force to their utter ruine? Are we beholden to him barely for ſuffering us

to live in our native Soil, and enjoy only our fundamental Priviledges? Is this all the reward and encouragement we deſerve? Are not we the *praying and ſerious People of the Nation*, for whoſe ſakes only the Lord is pleaſed to ſtay among us? And were it not for us, would he not perfectly forſake and abandon it? And is this all our requital, to be thus ſlighted, and thus deſpiſed, only for our zeal to God, and ſerviceableneſs to the Publick, by that power and intereſt we have in him, to keep him among us; whilſt *vain and uſeleſs perſons* are countenanced and encouraged with all places of Office and Employment? Theſe are the natural reſults of the minds of men, who think themſelves ſcorn'd and diſreſpected, eſpecially when fluſh'd with any conceit and high opinion of their own Godlineſs. And 'tis an eternal Truth, *That for the godly Party not to be uppermoſt, is and ever will be Perſecution.* For nothing more certain, than that all men entertain the beſt opinion of their own Party, otherwiſe they had never enrolled themſelves in it: and therefore if the State value them not at as high a rate as they do themſelves, they are

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ſcorn'd and injured, becauſe they have not that favour and countenance they deſerve. And ſo unleſs they have Publick encouragement, as well as indulgence, they have reaſon to be diſcontented, becauſe they have not their due. And if the Prince do not eſpouſe their Party, he undervalues, and conſequently diſguſts them; and if he joyn himſelf to any other (as there is a neceſſity of his owning ſome Profeſſion) he does not only diſoblige, but alienate their Affections, by embracing an Intereſt they both hate and ſcorn. For, where-ever there is *difference* of Religion, there is *oppoſition* too; becauſe men would never divide from one another, but upon grounds of real diſlike; and therefore they are always *contrary* in thoſe Differences that diſtinguiſh their Parties. And this cannot but be a mighty endearment of their Prince to them, when he neglects and diſcountenances his beſt Subjects, only becauſe they are the godly Party (for ſo every Party is to it ſelf) to join himſelf to their profeſt and irreconcileable Enemies. And they will be wonderfully forward to aſſiſt a Patron of Idolatry and Superſtition, or an Enemy

to

to the power of godlineſs (for theſe are the ſofteſt words that different Sects can afford one another.) And withal I might adde, That they muſt needs be much in love with him, when they have reaſon to believe, that they lie perpetually under his diſpleaſure, and that he looks upon them as little better than Enemies. So that if a Prince permit different Parties and intereſts of Religion in his Dominions, however he carries himſelf towards them, he ſhall have at leaſt all Parties diſcontented but one: for if himſelf be of any, he diſpleaſes all but that; if of none, he diſpleaſes all: And Zealous and Religious People of all ſorts muſt needs be wonderfully in love with an *Atheiſt*; and there is no remedy, but he muſt at leaſt be thought ſo, if he be not of any diſtinct and viſible profeſſion.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Of things Indifferent, and of the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate in Things undetermined by the Word of God.

The Contents.

The Myſtery of Puritaniſm lies in this Aſſertion, That nothing ought to be eſtabliſhed in the Worſhip of God, but what is expreſly commanded in the Word of God. The Wildneſs, Novelty, and unreaſonableneſs of this Principle. It makes meer Obedience to lawful Authority ſinful. It takes away all poſſibility of Settlement in any Church or Nation. It is the main pretenſe of all pious Villanies. It cancels all Humane Laws; and makes moſt of the Divine

Laws

Laws uſeleſs and impracticable. It obliges men to be ſeditious in all Churches in the World, in that there is no Church that has not ſome Cuſtoms and Uſages peculiar to it ſelf. All that pretend this Principle do and muſt act contrary to it. The exorbitancy of this Principle makes all yielding and condeſcenſion to the men that plead it unſafe and impolitick. Wherein the perfection and ſufficiency of the Holy Scriptures conſiſts. Of the Vanity of their Diſtinction, who tell us, That the Civil Magiſtrate is to ſee the Laws of Chriſt executed, but to make none of his own. The dangerous conſequents of their way of arguing, who would prove, That God ought to have determined all Circumſtances of his own Worſhip. 'Tis ſcarce poſſible to determine all Circumſtances of any outward action, they are ſo many and ſo various. The Magiſtrate has no way to make men of this perſwaſion comply with his will, but by forbidding what he would have done. The Puritans upbraided with Mr. Hooker's *Book of* Eccleſiaſtical Politie, *and challeng'd to anſwer it. Their Out-cries againſt Popery, Will-worſhip,*

worſhip, Superſtition, adding to the Law of God, &c. retorted upon themſelves. The main Objection againſt the Magiſtrates power in Religion propoſed, viz. That 'tis poſſible that he may impoſe things ſinful and ſuperſtitious. This Objection lies as ſtrongly againſt all manner of Government. Our inquiry is after the beſt way of ſettling things, not that poſſibly might be, but that really is. Though Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction may be abuſed, yet 'tis then leſs miſchievous than Liberty of Conſcience. The Reaſon of the neceſſity of ſubjection to the worſt of Governours, becauſe Tyranny is leſs miſchievous than Rebellion or Anarchy. The Author of the Book entituled, Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos, *confuted. That it may, and often does ſo happen, that 'tis neceſſary to puniſh men for ſuch perſwaſions into which they have innocently abuſed themſelves. Actions are puniſhable by Humane Laws, not for their ſinfulneſs, but for their ill Conſequence to the Publick. This applied to the Caſe of a well-meaning Conſcience.*

Sect. 1. All

Sect. 1. ALL things, as well Sacred as Civil, that are not already determined as to their Morality, *i. e.* that are not made neceſſary Duties by being commanded, or ſinful Actions by being forbidden either by the Law of Nature, or poſitive Law of God, may be lawfully determined either way by the Supreme Authority; and the Conſcience of every ſubject is tied to yield Obedience to all ſuch Determinations. This *Aſſertion* I lay down to oppoſe the firſt and the laſt and the great Pretence of Non-conformity, and wherein (as one obſerveth) the very *Myſtery of Puritaniſm* conſiſteth, *viz.* That nothing ought to be eſtabliſhed in the Worſhip of God, but what is authorized by ſome Precept or Example in the Word of God; that is the complete and adequate Rule of Worſhip: and therefore, *Chriſtian Magiſtrates are only to ſee that executed that Chriſt has appointed in Religion, but to bring in nothing of their own; they are tied up neither to add nor diminiſh, neither in the matter nor manner:* So that whatever they injoin in Divine Worſhip,

ſhip, if it be not expreſly warranted by a Divine Command, how innocent ſoever it may be in it ſelf, it preſently upon that account loſes not only its *Liberty* but its *Lawfulneſs*; it being as requiſite to Chriſtian practice, that things indifferent ſhould ſtill be kept indifferent, as things neceſſary be held neceſſary. This very Principle is the only Fountain and Foundation of all Puritaniſm, from which it was at firſt derived, and into which it is at laſt reſolved. A pretence ſo ſtrangely wild and humorſom, that it is to me an equal wonder, either that they ſhould be ſo abſurd as ſeriouſly to believe it; or, if they do not, that they ſhould be ſo impudent, as thus long and thus confidently to pretend it, when it has not the leaſt ſhadow of Foundation either from Reaſon or from Scripture; and was ſcarce ever ſo much as thought of, till ſome men having made an unreaſonable Separation from the Church of *England*, were forced to juſtifie themſelves by as unreaſonable Pretences. For, what can be more incredible, than that things that were before lawful and innocent, ſhould become ſinful upon no other ſcore than their being commanded,

i. e.

i. e. that meer obedience to lawful Authority ſhould make innocent actions criminal? For the matter of the Law is ſuppoſed of it ſelf indifferent; and therefore if obedience to the Law be unlawful, it can be ſo for no other reaſon than becauſe 'tis Obedience. So that if Chriſtian Liberty be ſo awkard a thing (as theſe men make it) 'tis nothing elſe but *Chriſtian Rebellion*, 'tis a Duty that binds men to diſobedience, and forbids things under that formality, becauſe Authority commands them. Now what a reproach to the Goſpel is this, that it ſhould be made the only Plea for Sedition? What a ſcandal to Religion, that tenderneſs of Conſcience ſhould be made the only Principle of Diſobedience; and that nothing ſhould ſo much incline men to be refractory to Authority, as their being conſcientious? What a perverſe folly is it to imagine, That nothing but oppoſition to Government can ſecure our liberty? And what a croſs-grain'd thing is it, to reſtrain things only becauſe they are matters of liberty; and firſt to forbid Princes to command them becauſe they are lawful, and then Subjects to do them only becauſe

becauſe they are commanded. But to expoſe the abſurdity of this Principle by ſome more particular conſiderations.

§ 2. Firſt, The follies and miſchiefs that iſſue from it, are ſo infinite, that there can be no ſetled Frame of things in the World, that it will not overturn: and if it be admitted to all intents and purpoſes, there can never be an end of diſturbances, and alterations in the Church; in that there never was, nor ever can be any *Form of Worſhip* in the World, that is to all circumſtances preſcribed in the Word of God: and therefore if this Exception be thought ſufficient to deſtroy one, there is no remedy but it may, as occaſion requires, ſerve as well to caſhier all; and by conſequence take away all poſſibility of ſettlement. Thus when upon this Principle, the Diſciplinarians ſeparated from the Church of *England*, the Independents upon the ſame ground ſeparated from them, the Anabaptiſts from the Independents, the Familiſts from the Anabaptiſts, and the Quakers from the Familiſts, and every Faction divided, and ſubdivided among themſelves into innu-

merable Sects, and Underſects; and as long as men act up to it, there is no remedy, but Innovations muſt be endleſs. If it be urged againſt Lord-Biſhops, 'tis as ſevere againſt *Lay-Presbyters*; if againſt Muſick in Churches, then farewel ſinging of Pſalms in Rhime; if againſt the Croſs, why not againſt ſprinkling in Baptiſm? and if againſt Cathedral Churches, then down go all *Steeple-Houſes*: If againſt one thing, then againſt every thing; and there is nothing in the exteriour parts of Religion, but the two Sacraments, that can poſſibly eſcape its impeachment. All the pious Villanies, that have ever diſturbed the Chriſtian World, have ſhelter'd themſelves in this grand Maxime, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is the only Law-maker to his Church; and whoever takes upon himſelf to preſcribe any thing in Religion, invades his Kingly Office. The *Gnoſticks* of old ſo abuſed this pretence to juſtifie any ſeditious and licentious practices, that they made Heathen Princes look upon Chriſtianity as an Enemy to Government; and the *Fanaticks* of late have ſo vex'd and embroil'd Chriſtendom with the ſame Principle, that Chriſtian Princes them-

themſelves begin to be of the ſame perſwaſion. 'Tis become the only Patron and Pretext of Sedition: and when any Subjects have a mind to ſet themſelves free from the Laws of their Prince, they can never want this pretence to warrant their diſobedience. Seeing there is no Nation in the World that has not divers Laws, that are not recorded by the four *Evangeliſts*; and therefore if all humane Inſtitutions intrench upon our Saviours Kingly Prerogative, they are, and ever muſt be, provided with matters of quarrel to diſturb Government, and juſtifie Rebellion.

§ 3. Secondly, Nay further this fond pretence, if made uſe of to all the ends, for which it might as wiſely ſerve, would cancel all humane Laws, and make moſt of the divine Laws uſeleſs; which have only deſcribed the general Lines of Duty, but left their particular determinations to the Wiſdom of humane Laws. Now the Laws of God cannot be put in practice, but in particular Caſes and Circumſtances, theſe cannot be determin'd but by the Laws of man; therefore if he can command nothing, but

what is already preſcribed to us in the Word of God, he can have no power to ſee the Divine Laws put in Execution. For where are deſcribed all the Rules of Juſtice and Honeſty? Where are determined all doubts and queſtions of Conſcience? Where are decided all Controverſies of Right and Wrong? Where are recorded all the Laws of Government and Policy? Why therefore ſhould humane Authority be allowed to interpoſe in theſe great affairs, and yet be denied it in the Cuſtoms of Churches and Rules of Decency? There is no poſſible reaſon to be aſſign'd but their own humour and fond opinion, they are reſolved to believe it, and that is Argument enough, for 'tis unanſwerable. How comes this Propoſition to be now limited to matters of meer Religion, but only becauſe this ſerves their turn; for otherwiſe, Why are not the Holy Scriptures as perfect a Rule of Civil, as of Eccleſiaſtical Policy? Why ſhould they not be as complete a *Syſtem* of Ethicks, as they are a *Canon* of Worſhip? Why do not theſe men require from the Scriptures expreſs Commands for every Action they do in common life? How dare they take any Phyſick,

Phyſick, but what is preſcribed in the Word of God? How dare they commence a Suit at Law, without *Warranty* from Scripture? How dare they do any natural action, without particular advice and direction of Holy Writ?

§ 4. Thirdly, But as fooliſh as this Opinion is, its miſchief equals its folly; for 'tis impoſſible but that theſe Sons of ſtrife and ſingularity muſt have been troubleſom and ſeditious in all Churches and Common-wealths. Had they lived under the Jewiſh Church, why then, Where has *Moſes* commanded the Feaſt of *Purim*, the Feaſt of the Dedication, the Faſts of the fourth, the fifth, the ſeventh, and the tenth months: What Warrant for the building of *Synagogues?* and what Command for that ſignificant Ceremony of wearing ſackcloth and aſhes, in token of Humiliation? If in the primitive Ages of Chriſtianity, why then, where did our Saviour appoint the *Love-Feaſts?* Where has he inſtituted the *Kiſs of Charity?* Where has he commanded the obſervations of *Lent* and *Eaſter*? Where the *Lords-Day Sabbath?* and, where all their other

Commemorative Feſtivals? *Vide Tertull. de Coronâ, c. 3.*

Will they retreat to the *Lutheran* Churches, they will there meet with not only all the ſame, but many more Antichriſtian and ſuperſtitious Ceremonies to offend their tender Conſciences, and will find themſelves ſubject to the ſame Diſcipline and Government, ſaving that their Superintendents want the *Antichriſtian* Honours and Revenues of the Engliſh Biſhops, partly through the poverty of the Country, partly through the injury of Sacriledge, but mainly becauſe the Church Revenues are in the poſſeſſion of Romiſh Biſhops? Will they to *France*, there, notwithſtanding the unſetled ſtate of the Proteſtants of that Nation, through want of the aſſiſtance of the Civil Power, they ſhall meet with their Liturgies, and eſtabliſht Forms of Prayer, and Change of Apparel for Divine Service, as well as at home? If they will to *Geneva*, there Mr. *Calvin's* Common-Prayer-Book is as much impoſed, as the Liturgy of the Church of *England*; there they are enjoyn'd the uſe of Wafer-Cakes, the Cuſtom of Godfathers, and Godmothers, bid-

bidding of Prayer, proper Pſalms not only for days, but for hours of the day, with divers other Rites and Ceremonies, that are no where recorded in the Word of God. In a word, What Church in the World can affirm theſe were the only Cuſtoms of the Apoſtolical Age, and that the Primitive Church never uſed more or leſs than theſe? So that theſe men of ſcruple, that renounce Communion with the Church of *England*, muſt do the ſame with all Churches in the World; in that there is not any one Church in Chriſtendom, whoſe Laws and Cuſtoms are not apparently liable either to the ſame, or as great exceptions. Now Magiſtrates muſt needs be obligd to deal wonderful gently with ſuch tender Conſciences as theſe, that are acted by ſuch nice and unhappy Principles, as muſt force them to be troubleſom and unpeaceable in any Common-wealth in the World. Nay, what is more notorious than all this, theſe men have all along, in purſuit of this Principle, run directly counter to their own practices and perſwaſions. For, not to puzzle them to diſcover in which of the Goſpels is injoyn'd the form of *Publick Penance* in the Kirk

of *Scotland*, or to find out the *Stool of Repentance* either among the works of *Bezaleel*, or the Furniture of the Temple; We read indeed of Beesoms, and Flesh-forks, and Pots, and Shovels, and Candlesticks, but not one syllable of Joynt-stools. Let them tell me, What Precept or Example they have in the Holy Scriptures for singing Psalms in Meeter? Where has our Saviour or his Apostles enjoyn'd a *Directory* for publick Worship? And that which themselves imposed, What Divine Authority can it challenge, beside that of an *Ordinance* of Lords and Commons? What Precept in the Word of God can they produce for the significant Form of swearing (by laying their hand upon the Bible) which yet they never scrupled? What Scripture Command have they for the three *significant Ceremonies* of the solemn League and Covenant, *viz.* That the whole Congregation should take it (1.) Uncovered, (2.) Standing, (3.) with their right hand lift up bare. Now, What a prodigious piece of impudence was this, that when they had not only written so many Books with so much vehemence against three innocent Ceremonies

monies of the Church, only becauſe they were ſignificant, but had alſo involved the Nation in a civil War (in a great meaſure) for their removal, and had arm'd themſelves and their Party againſt their Sovereign with this *Holy League* of Rebellion, that even then they ſhould impoſe three others, ſo groſly and ſo apparently liable to all their own Objections? What clearer evidence can we poſſibly have, That it is not Conſcience, but humour and peeviſhneſs that dictates their ſcruples? And, What inſtance have we, in any Nation of the World, of any Schiſm and Faction ſo unreaſonably begun and continued? The Rebellion of *Corah* indeed may reſemble, but nothing can equal it.

And from hence we may diſcover, how vain a thing it is to make Propoſals and Condeſcenſions to ſuch unreaſonable men, when 'tis ſo impoſſible to ſatisfie all their demands; and ſuppoſe we ſhould yield and deliver up to their zeal, thoſe harmleſs Ceremonies, they have ſo long worried with ſo much fury and impatience; it would only cheriſh them in their reſtleſs and ungovernable perſwaſions: For whilſt their peeviſh tempers

pers are acted by this exorbitant Principle, the Affairs of Religion can never be ſo ſetled, as to take away all occaſions and pretences of Quarrel; in that there never can be any Circumſtances of Religious Worſhip, againſt which this Principle may not as rationally be urged (and 'tis impoſſible to perform Religious Worſhip without ſome Circumſtance or other: and if all men make not uſe of it againſt all particulars, 'tis becauſe they are humourſom as well as ſeditious, and ſo allow one thing upon the ſame Principle they diſavow another: For certainly otherwiſe it were impoſſible, that any men ſhould, when they pray, refuſe to wear a Surplice; and yet when they ſwear, (which is but another ſort of Divine Worſhip) never ſcruple to kiſs the Goſpel. So that whoever ſeriouſly imbibes this perſwaſion, and upon that account withdraws himſelf from the Communion of the Church, he underſtands not the conſequences of his Opinion; if it does not lead him down to the loweſt folly of *Quakeriſm*, which after divers gradual exorbitances of other leſs extravagant Sects, was but the laſt and utmoſt improvement of this Principle.

ciple. And therefore, whilſt men are poſſeſs'd with ſuch a reſtleſs and untoward perſwaſion, What can be more apparently vain, than to talk of *Accommodations*, or to hope for any poſſibility of quiet and ſetlement, till Authority ſhall ſee it neceſſary (as it will firſt or laſt) to ſcourge them into better manners, and wiſer opinions? So that we ſee the weight of the Controverſie lies not ſo much in the particular matters in debate, as in the Principles upon which 'tis managed; and for this very reaſon, though we are not ſo fond as to believe the Conſtitutions of the Church unalterable, yet we deem it apparently abſurd, to forego any of her eſtabliſh'd Ceremonies out of compliance with theſe mens unreaſonable demands: which as it would be coarſly impolitick upon divers other accounts, ſo mainly by yielding up her Laws, and by conſequence ſubmitting her Authority to ſuch Principles as muſt be eternal and invincible hindrances of Peace and Setlement. This, let them conſider whom it moſt concerns.

§ 5. Fourthly, As for their Principle of

of the perfection and ſufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, 'tis undeniably certain as to the fundamental Truths, and ſubſtantial Duties of Chriſtian Religion; but when this Rule, that is ſuited only to things neceſſary, is as confidently applied to things acceſſory, it lays in the minds of men impregnable Principles of Folly and Superſtition: For confounding them in their different apprehenſions between the ſubſtantial Duties, and external Circumſtances of Religion; and making them of equal value and neceſſity, it makes the doing, or not doing of a thing, neceſſary to procure the Divine acceptance, which God himſelf has not made ſo; and places a Religion in things that are not religious, and poſſeſſeth the minds of men with falſe and groundleſs fears of God: wherein conſiſteth the very Eſſence and Formality of Superſtition. Whereas were they duly inſtructed in the great difference between things abſolutely neceſſary, and things meerly decent, and circumſtantial; this would not only preſerve them in the right Notions of good and evil, but alſo keep up the Purity of Religion, Decency of Worſhip, and due Reverence of Authority.

rity. And therefore when these men would punctually tye up the Magistrate to add nothing to the Worship of God, but what is enjoyn'd in the Word of God, if their meaning be of new Articles of Belief, 'tis notoriously impertinent; because to this no Civil Magistrate pretends; But if their meaning be, that the Magistrate has no Authority to determine the particular circumstances of Religion, that are left undetermined by the Divine Law, 'tis then indeed to the purpose, but as notoriously false; in that we are certainly bound to obey him in all things lawful, and every thing is so, that is not made unlawful by some prohibition; for things become evil not upon the score of their being not commanded, but upon that of their being forbidden; and what the Scripture forbids not, it allows; and what it allows, is not unlawful; and what is not unlawful, may lawfully be done: and therefore it must needs be our Duty to conform to all circumstances of Worship, that are determined by lawful Authority, if they are not antecedently forbidden by the Law of God, though they are not commanded. Things that are not determined remain indifferent; what

what is indifferent is lawful, and what is lawful the Magiſtrate may lawfully command; and if it be ſinful to obey him in theſe things, 'tis ſo to obey him at all; for all things are either lawful or unlawful: 'tis a ſin to obey him in things unlawful, and if it be ſo in things lawful too, then is all obedience ſinful.

§ 6. Fifthly, When they tell us, That the Civil Magiſtrate is indeed to ſee to the execution of the Laws of Chriſt, but to make none of his own: 'tis a diſtinction without a difference; for if he may provide for the execution of the Laws of Religion, then may he make Laws that they ſhall be executed; this being the moſt proper and effectual means to promote their execution: ſo that nothing can be more vain than to deny the Civil Magiſtrate a power of making Laws in Religion, and yet to allow him an Authority to ſee the Laws of Religion executed; becauſe that is ſo apparently implyed in this, in that whoever has a power to ſee that Laws be executed, cannot be without a power to command their execution: Eſpecially if we conſider the particular Nature of the Laws

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of Christ, that they have only determined the substance and Morality of religious Worship, and therefore must needs have left the ordering of its circumstances to the power and wisdom of lawful Authority; & whatever they determine about them, is but in order to the execution of the Laws of God; in that whatever they enjoyn cannot be put in practice, without being clothed with some particular circumstances, and reduced to some particular Cases. Thus when the Holy Apostle sets us down a general Rule, that all things be done in order and decency, without determining what the things are that are conducive to it, the determination of this Rule when 'tis reduced to practice, must be entirely left to the Government of the Church, that must judge what things are decent and orderly; and what Laws it establishes in order to it, though they are but further pursuances of the Apostolical Precept, yet are they new and distinct Commands by themselves, and injoyn something, that the Scripture no where commands. So that the Divine Laws being general, and general Laws not being to be put in Execution, but in particular

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Caſes and Inſtances, he that has Authority to look to the Execution of theſe general Laws, muſt withal be veſted with a Power to determine with what particular Inſtances, Caſes, and Circumſtances they ſhall be put in Practice and Execution.

And here when they tell us, that it cannot ſtand with the Love and Wiſdom of God, not to take order himſelf for all things that immediately concern his own Worſhip and Kingdom; and that if *Jeſus Chriſt* has not determined all particular Rites and Circumſtances of Religion, he has diſcharged his office with leſs wiſdom and fidelity than *Moſes*; who ordered every thing appertaining to the Worſhip of God, even as far as the *Pins* and *Nails* of the Tabernacle, with divers others the like idle and impertinent reaſonings: One would think that men who argue at this rate, had already at leaſt diſcovered in the Holy Scriptures a complete Form of Religious Worſhip, as to all particular Rites and Ceremonies of an eternal, univerſal, and unchangeable obligation; and therefore till they can believe this themſelves, and prove it to others, inſtead of

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returning ſolemn Anſwers to ſuch baffled and intolerable Impertinencies, I ſhall only adviſe them, to conſider the unlucky conſequents of their way of arguing, when inſtead of producing a particular Form of Publick Worſhip, preſcribed by God himſelf, they with their wonted modeſty prove he ought to have done it; and that unleſs he has done it, he has been defective in his Care & Providence over his Church: For what can the Iſſue of this be, but that God is chargeable with want of Wiſdom or Goodneſs, or with ſome other Defect, even by certain and infallible Experience? For, if he has not determined every particular Circumſtance of Worſhip, then he muſt ſtand charged with all the abſurdities, they object againſt their being left undetermined; and therefore if no ſuch preſcribed form can be produced, (as 'tis infinitely certain none ever can) then let them conſider, what follows. So unhappy a thing is it, when men will needs be diſputing againſt Experience; whoſe Evidence is ſo powerful and forcible upon the minds of men, that Demonſtration it ſelf is not ſtrong enough to cope with it: How much leſs the weak and puny Arguments,

guments, wherewith theſe men aſſault it?

Sect. 7. Sixthly, There is no particular Action but what is capable of a ſtrange and unaccountable variety of Circumſtances, nor any part of outward Worſhip but may be done after a thouſand different Modes and Faſhions; in that as every action is clothed with natural and emergent Circumſtances, ſo is every Circumſtance with its Circumſtances, every one of which may be modified in ſundry ways and manners. And therefore, in this infinite variety of things, the Laws of God preſcribe only the general Lines of Duty, and rarely deſcend to their particular Determinations, but leave them to be determined by Prudence and Diſcretion, by Choice, and Cuſtom, by Laws, and Preſcriptions, and by all thoſe ways by which Humane Affairs are governed and tranſacted. Thus for example, The Divine Law has made Charity a ſtanding and eternal Duty, but has left its particular way of expreſſion undetermined, and uncommanded: and 'tis indifferent whether it be done by building of Colledges, or Churches, or Hoſpitals; by repairing

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of Bridges, or Rivers, or High-ways; by redeeming of Slaves and Priſoners; by hoſpitality to the Poor, or Proviſion for Orphans; or by any other way of Publick or Private Bounty: and when a man's own thoughts have determined his own choice to one or more of theſe Particulars, even that is veſted with a ſtrange number of Accidents and Circumſtances, which muſt of neceſſity be left entirely to the conduct of his own Reaſon and Diſcretion. And the caſe is the ſame, as in all other Duties of Moral Virtue; ſo in that of religious gratitude, or Divine Worſhip, this Duty it ſelf is of a natural and eſſential neceſſity; but yet may and muſt be performed with an unconceivable variety of Dreſſes, Cuſtoms and ways of Expreſſion, that are left utterly free and undetermined in Scripture: any of which may be decently uſed, provided they do not make debaſing repreſentations of God, wherein conſiſts the proper folly of Idolatry and Superſtition. And all the advantages of Order and Solemnity, wherewith Religion may be prudently adorned, are not only lawful, but decent, although they are not warranted by any Precept in the

Word of God; that neither has, nor indeed can determine all particular Modes and Circumſtances of Worſhip, they are ſo various, and ſo changeable. And men may, with as much reaſon, ſearch the holy Records for the Methods of *Legal Proceedings* in our Common Law Courts, as for particular *Rubricks* and *Preſcriptions* of all outward Forms and Circumſtances of Publick Worſhip: So that what theſe men demand is ſo unreaſonable, that, conſidering the nature of things, 'tis impoſſible.

Sect. 8. And this may ſuffice to demonſtrate the unparallel'd follies and miſchiefs of this Principle. Which being all I intend at preſent, I ſuppoſe it needleſs to engage in any further Scholaſtick Diſputes, about the nature of *indifferent Actions*, and ſome other leſs material Controverſies that depend upon this; partly becauſe this Principle on which alone they ſtand, being removed, they become utterly groundleſs, and ſo by its Confutation are ſufficiently confuted; and partly becauſe all this has been ſo often, ſo fully, and ſo infinitely performed already. And of all the Controverſies

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that have ever been ſtarted in the world, it will be hard to find any that have been more fairly purſued and ſatisfactorily decided, than this of the Church of *England*, againſt its *Puritan* Adverſaries; that has all along been nothing elſe but a Diſpute between Rational Learning, and Unreaſonable Zeal. And it has been no leſs an unhappineſs, than it was a Condeſcenſion in the Defenders of our Church; that they have been forced to waſte their time and their parts, in baffling the idle Cavils of a few hot-headed and Brain-ſick People. And there is ſcarce a greater Inſtance of the unreaſonableneſs of Mankind, than theſe mens Folly, in perſiſting ſo obſtinately in their old and pitiful Clamours, after they have been ſo convincingly anſwered, and ſo demonſtratively confuted. And indeed how is it poſſible to ſatisfie ſuch unreaſonable men, when their greateſt Exception againſt the Conſtitutions of the Church has ever been no other than, That they were the Churches Conſtitutions? Inſomuch, that if Authority ſhould think good out of compliance with their croſs Demands, to command what they now think neceſſary, that muſt then, ac-

cording to their Principles, become unlawful: becauſe (forſooth) where they take away the liberty of an Action, they deſtroy its lawfulneſs. Now what poſſibly could have betrayed men into ſo abſurd a Perſwaſion, but a ſtubborn Reſolution to be refractory to all Authority, and to be ſubject to nothing but their own inſolent *Humours*? And as long as they lie under the power of this Perſwaſion, that they are obliged in Conſcience to act contrary to whatever their Superiours command them in the Worſhip of God, the Magiſtrate has no other way left to *decoy* them into Obedience, but by forbidding what he would have them do, and commanding what he would have them forbear; and then if he will accept to be obeyed by diſobedience, he ſhall find them (good men) the moſt obedient Subjects in the world.

Sect. 9. But to return to what I was ſaying, inſtead of troubling my ſelf with any further Confutation of ſo baffled a Cauſe, I ſhall rather chuſe to do it more briefly, and yet perhaps more effectually, by uybraiding them with their ſhameful Overthrows, and daring them

them but to look those Enemies in the face, that have so lamentably cowed them by so many absolute Triumphs and Victories: And, not to mention divers other Learned and Excellent Persons, I shall only single out that famous Champion of our Church, Mr. *Hooker*; upon him let them try their Courage (though by so safe a Challenge I do but give proof of my own Cowardise.) How long has his incomparable Book of *Ecclesiastical Polity* bid shameful defiance to the whole Party, and yet never found any so hardy as to venture upon an Encounter? Now this Author being confessedly a Person of so much Learning, Candour, Judgment, and Ingenuity, and withal so highly prized, and insisted upon by the regular and obedient Sons of the Church, that they have in a manner cast the issue of the whole Cause upon his performance: What is the Reason he was never vouchsafed so much as the attempt of a just Reply? 'Tis apparent enough both by their Writings, and their Actions, that they have not wanted Zeal; and therefore that he has escaped so long free from all contradiction, 'tis not for want of good will, but ability; not

becauſe they would not, but becauſe they were convinced they could not confute him. So that the Book it ſelf is as full and demonſtrative a Confutation of their Cauſe, as the matters contained in it; *i. e.* 'tis Unanſwerable, (and I know nothing can do it more effectually, unleſs perhaps a Reply to it) and ſhall live an eternal ſhame and reproach to their Cauſe, when that is dead; and would probably have been buried in utter forgetfulneſs, were it not for this Trophy of ſucceſs againſt them: And therefore, until they can at leaſt pretend to have returned ſome ſatisfactory Anſwer to that Diſcourſe, they prove nothing but their own impudence; whilſt they continually pelt us with their *Pamphlets*, and ſuch little Exceptions, that have been ſo long ſince ſo ſhamefully and demonſtratively baffled.

Sect. 10. And whereas they are wont, in order to the making their Principles look more plauſibly, to ſtuff their Diſcourſes with frequent and tragical Declamations againſt Popery, Will-worſhip, Superſtition, *&c.* I cannot perſwade my ſelf, 'tis worth the labour to wipe off ſuch idle

idle reproaches, by ſolemnly diſcourſing theſe matters; both becauſe this has been ſo frequently and fully performed already, and becauſe, though theſe outcries have been made uſe of to affright ſilly People; yet few, if any of their *Ring-leaders* are ſtill ſo fond either to own this Charge againſt us, or to plead it in their own Juſtification. Only I cannot but obſerve of all theſe and the like Pretences, that we need not any ſtronger Arguments againſt themſelves, than their own Objections againſt us. For if in this Caſe there be any *Superſtition*, 'tis they that are guilty of it: For this Vice conſiſts not ſo much in the nature of things, as in the apprehenſions of men, when their minds are poſſeſſed with weak and unworthy conceits of God. Now he that conforms to the received Cuſtoms and Ceremonies of a Church, does it not ſo much upon the account of any intrinſick value of the things themſelves, as out of a ſenſe of the neceſſity of Order, and of the Duty of Obedience: whereas he that ſcrupulouſly refuſes to Uſe and Practiſe them, takes a wrong eſtimate of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and imagines that God judges his

his Creatures by nice and pettiſh Laws, and lays a greater ſtreſs upon a doubtful or indifferent Ceremony, than upon the great Duty of Obedience, and the peace and tranquillity of the Church. So that the Principles upon which we proceed, are no other, than, That, as the Divine Law has preſcribed the *Subſtantial Duties* of Religion; ſo it has left its Modes and Circumſtances undetermined: but becauſe every action muſt be done ſome way or other, and be veſted with ſome Circumſtances or other; and becauſe the generality of men are not ſo apt to be abuſed with fantaſtick and ridiculous conceits in any thing, as in matters of Religion; therefore we think it neceſſary, for the prevention of all the follies & indecencies, that ignorance and ſuperſtitious Zeal would introduce into the Worſhip of God, That the Publick Laws ſhould determine ſome Circumſtances of Order and Decency; which have at leaſt this *Advantage*, that they provide againſt the miſchiefs of Diſorder and Confuſion: and therefore we place no antecedent neceſſity in any of the particular Rites and Ceremonies of our Church, but only think it highly con-

convenient, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that ſome be preſcribed; that there is an handſomneſs and beauty in theſe that are preſcribed: and therefore, becauſe 'tis neceſſary that ſome be determined, and becauſe theſe are, rather than divers others, already ſettled, we think they have an indiſpenſable neceſſity ſuperinduced upon them, conſequent to the determinations of Authority. No man affirms, That we cannot ſerve God acceptably without a *Surplice*; but yet, becauſe 'tis but requiſite that Publick Worſhip ſhould be performed with beauty and ſolemnity; and becauſe the uſe of this *Veſtment* is but handſom and beautiful, and prevents ſlovenlineſs and indecency, 'tis but agreeable that it ſhould be injoin'd, as any other decent Habit might have been: and when this is ſingled out by Authority, it then becomes conſequentially neceſſary: Whereas thoſe, who forbid things indifferent as ſinful, and lay obligations upon mens Conſciences, to abſtain from what is innocent, and make that neceſſary not to be done, which God has left at liberty, and made lawful to be done; uſurp upon mens Conſciences,

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by impoſing Fetters on them, where God has left them free, and become guilty of the moſt palpable piece of Superſtition, by teaching their own Prohibitions for Doctrines; and ſo making it a neceſſary Duty, and part of Divine Worſhip, to abſtain from what God has no where forbidden; and making it a mortal and damnable Sin, to do what is innocent; and ſuppoſing that God will, or at leaſt juſtly may, inflict eternal Torments upon men, for making their Addreſſes to him, rather in a cleanly White Veſtment, than in a Taylors Cloak, or perhaps in Mechanical *Querpo*.

Sect. 11. And then as for their out-cry againſt *Will-worſhip*, 'tis the very ſame with that againſt Superſtition; for 'tis one ſort of it, and is criminal no farther than 'tis ſuperſtitious. Now when they exclaim againſt Superſtition, they mean only that part of it that conſiſts in Will-worſhip, and when againſt Will-worſhip, 'tis only as 'tis a Branch of Superſtition: So that theſe two impertinent Clamours ſignifie but the ſame thing under different Denominations, and ſo amount but to one. But however this is

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'tis certain, that *Will-worſhip* conſiſts in nothing elſe than in mens making their own fancies and inventions neceſſary parts of Religion, whereby they make that requiſite to procure the Divine acceptance, that God has no where required; and 'tis the ſame thing whether this be done by Injunctions or Prohibitions: and they that affirm the doing or not doing of an Action which God has no where either commanded or forbidden to be neceſſary Duties, are equally guilty of this Crime: And therefore if theſe men make it neceſſary to forbear what God has no where forbidden, they teach their own fancies for Doctrines, and impoſe ſomething as a part of the ſervice of God, on their own, and other mens Conſciences, that the Law of God has not impoſed; and withal ſo unworthily miſ-repreſent the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as to labour to make the world believe, That God has ſuch an abhorrency to a thing ſo innocent as a *White Garment*, That, to worſhip him in it, is ſufficient to bring us under his everlaſting Wrath and Diſpleaſure; for every thing that is ſinful, is as well in their, as our, eſteem mortal & damnable.

But

But then, as for our own parts, they cannot be more apparently guilty of this piece of folly, then we are clear and innocent from its very ſuſpicion; becauſe all Rituals, and Ceremonies, and Poſtures, and manners of performing the outward Expreſſions of Devotion, are not in their own nature capable of being parts of Religion; and therefore unleſs we uſed and impoſed them as ſuch, 'tis lamentably precarious to charge the determination of them with Will-worſhip; becauſe that conſiſts in making thoſe things Parts of Religion, that God has not made ſo. So that when the Church expreſly declares againſt this uſe of them, and only injoins them as meer Circumſtances of Religious Worſhip, 'tis apparent that it cannot by impoſing them, make any additions to the Worſhip of God, but only provides, That what God has required, be performed in a decent and orderly manner.

Sect. 12. And then as for *Chriſtian Liberty*, Why ſhould we ſuffer them ſo far to invade ours, as to renounce thoſe things as criminal, which we believe to be innocent?

nocent? And if things indifferent when injoin'd lose not only their liberty, but their lawfulness; then why not when forbidden, and that by an incompetent Authority? when our Superiours impose Rules of Decency, and Law of Discipline, they do not infringe our Christian Liberty; because they do not abolish the indifferency of things themselves, wherein alone it consisteth: and though they become thereby necessary Duties, 'tis not from the nature and necessity of the thing it self, but from the Obligations of Obedience, or some emergent Reasons of Order and Decency: whereas nothing can be more plain, than that these men do not only abridge our Liberty, but also lay insolent confinements upon the Supreme Power, by making things indifferent so absolutely unlawful, that they will not allow the just Commands of lawful Authority sufficient to make them cease to be sinful. How oft, and how plainly have they been told, that, when Authority injoins things left indifferent, and undetermined by the Word of God, 'tis so far from incroaching upon our Christian Liberty, that it rather confirms it? In that this

ſuppoſes that the things themſelves may, or may not be either done or enjoined, according to the dictates of Prudence and Diſcretion; but when they are once determined by publick Laws, though the matter of the Law be indifferent, yet Obedience to it is not. Whereas when they will not permit their Governours to injoin theſe things, and if they do, will not obey their injunctions, do they not apparently intrench upon our Liberty, by making what Chriſt has left indifferent, neceſſary; and, under pretences of aſſerting their Chriſtian Liberty, take upon them to confine the rights of Authority? But to all this, as evident as it is, nothing can make them attend; but they ſtill *deafly* proceed in their old Clamours: which is too clear an Argument, that 'tis not Reaſon that dictates their Exceptions, but humour, prejudice, and peeviſhneſs.

Sect. 13. And then as for their Declamations againſt adding to the Law of God, to be ſhort, I appeal to the Reaſon of all mankind, whether any men in the World are more notoriouſly guilty of unwarrantable Additions than theſe, who

who forbid those things as sinful, and consequently under pain of Damnation, which the Law of God has no where forbidden? What is it to teach the Commandments of men for Doctrines, but to teach those things to be the Law of God that are not so? And, What can more charge the Divine Law of Imperfection, than to teach that a man may perform all that it has commanded, and yet perish for not doing something, that it has not commanded? And so do they, who make it necessary not to do something that God has left indifferent. Whereas nothing can be more Unreasonable than to tax the Church of making Additions to the Law of God, because all her Laws are imposed, not as Laws of God, but as Laws of men, and so are not more liable to this Charge than *Justinian*'s Institutes, and *Littleton*'s Tenures.

And then in the last place, as for their noise against Popery, (a term, that, as well as some other angry words, signifies any thing that some men dislike) I shall say no more, than, that we have most reason to raise this out-cry, when they take upon themselves (as well as the old Gen-

tleman at *Rome*) to controul the Laws of the *Secular Powers*. And what do they, but ſet up a Pope in every mans Conſcience, whilſt they veſt it with a Power of countermanding the *Decrees of Princes*? Theſe things cannot but appear with an undeniable evidence to any man, that is not invincibly either ignorant, or wilful, or both: and therefore 'tis time they ſhould, at leaſt for ſhame, if they will not for Conſcience, ceaſe to diſturb the Church with Clamour, and Exceptions ſo miſerably impertinent, that I bluſh for having thus far purſued them with a ſerious Confutation. And therefore leaving them and their impertinencies together, (for I deſpair of ever ſeeing theſe old and dear Acquaintances parted) I ſhall now addreſs my ſelf to clear off one more material and more plauſible Objection, and ſo conclude this particular. And 'tis this.

Sect. 14. 'Tis poſſible, the Magiſtrate may be deceived in his Determinations, and eſtabliſh a Worſhip that is in its own nature ſinful and ſuperſtitious; in which caſe (if what I contend for be true) all his Subjects muſt either be Rebels,

bels, or Idolaters: if they obey, they ſin againſt God; if they diſobey, they ſin againſt their Sovereign. This is the laſt Iſſue of all that is objected in this Controverſie, and the only Argument that gives gloſs and colour to all their other *trifling pretences*: And yet 'tis no more than what may be as fairly objected againſt all Government of Moral and Political Affairs; for there 'tis as poſſible, that the Supreme Power may be miſtaken in its Judgment of good and evil; and yet no man will deny the Civil Power of Princes, becauſe they are fallible, and may perhaps abuſe it. And yet in this alone lies all the ſtrength of this Objection againſt their Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, becauſe forſooth, 'tis poſſible they may erre, and manage it to evil purpoſes. But whatever force it carries in it, it rather ſtrikes at the *Divine Providence*, than my Aſſertion, and charges that of being defective in making ſufficient Proviſions for the due Government of mankind, in that it has not ſet over us infallible Judges and Governours: For unleſs all Magiſtrates be guided by an unerring Spirit, 'tis poſſible they may act againſt the ends of their Inſtitution; and if this be a

ſufficient Objection againſt their Authority, it muſt of neceſſity overthrow the Power of all fallible Judicatures, and make Governours as incompetent Judges in matters of Morality and Controverſies of right and wrong, as in Articles of Faith and Religion. And therefore our Enquiry is, to find out the beſt way of ſetling the world, that the ſtate of things is capable of: If indeed mankind were infallible, this Controverſie were at an end; but ſeeing that all men are liable to Errors and Miſtakes, and ſeeing there is an abſolute neceſſity of a Supreme Power in all Publick Affairs, our Queſtion (I ſay) is, What is the moſt prudent, and expedient way of ſetling them; not that poſſibly might be, but that really is? And this (as I have already ſufficiently proved) is, to devolve their management on the Supreme Civil Power; which though it may be imperfect and liable to Errors and Miſtakes, yet 'tis the leaſt ſo, and is a much better way to attain Publick Peace and Tranquillity, than if they were entirely left to the ignorance and folly of every private man, which muſt of neceſſity be pregnant with all manner of Miſchiefs and Confuſions. So that this

this method, I have assign'd, being comparatively the best way of Government of all Ecclesiastical, as well as Civil Affairs, is not to be rejected, because 'tis liable to some inconveniences; but rather to be embraced above all others, because 'tis liable to incomparably the fewest. And if it so happen, that some private persons suffer wrong from this method of proceeding, yet this private injury has an ample Compensation from the Publick benefit that arises from it; and when it so falls out that either the whole Society, or one individual must suffer, 'tis easie to determine, that better one honest man perish, than a million. The inconveniences of a bad Government are inconsiderable, in comparison to Anarchy and Confusion; and the evils, that fall upon particular men from its unskilful or irregular Administration, are vastly too little to weigh against the necessity of its institution.

Sect. 15. And upon this Principle stands the necessity of subjection and obedience to all Authority, in that, though its ill management may happen to bring many and great inconveniences upon the

Publick; yet they cannot equal the miſchiefs of that Confuſion which muſt neceſſarily ariſe, if Subjects are warranted to diſobey, or reſiſt Government, whenever they ſhall apprehend 'tis ill adminiſtred. Perhaps never any Government was ſo good, as to be adminiſtred with exact Juſtice and Equity, nor any Governour ſo wiſe, as not to be chargeable with faults and miſcarriages; and therefore if upon every quarrel every wiſe or honeſt man can pick againſt the Laws of the Common-wealth, he may lawfully withdraw his obedience, What can follow but a certain and unavoidable diſſolution of Government, when every man will be commanded by nothing, but his own Perſwaſions, that is himſelf? And upon this account 'tis that the Law of God has tied upon us ſuch an abſolute and indiſpenſable ſubjection to Authority, which though it may be miſchievous, yet 'tis leſs ſo than diſobedience: and the world muſt be govern'd, as it can be, by Men, and not as it might be, by Angels. The management indeed of Humane Affairs is generally bad enough, but 'tis as well as can probably be expected, if we conſider the weakneſſes and imperfections

fections of humane Nature: and therefore we must bear it as well as we can: becauſe if we go about to alter any preſent Setlement, we muſt almoſt of neceſſity make it worſe: And all the effects of ſuch attempts have ſeldom ended in any thing elſe but perpetual Confuſions, till things have at length reſetled in the ſame, or as bad, (if not a worſe) condition than they were in before. The miſeries of Tyranny are leſs, than thoſe of Anarchy; and therefore 'tis better to ſubmit to the unreaſonable Impoſitions of *Nero*, or *Caligula*, than to hazard the diſſolution of the State, and conſequently all the Calamities of War and Confuſion, by denying our ſubjection to Tyrants. And there never was any lawful Magiſtrate ſo bad, whoſe Laws and Government were not more conducive to the preſervation of the Common Good, than his Oppreſſion was to ſubvert it: and 'tis wiſely eligible to ſuffer a leſs Evil, rather than loſe a greater good. 'Tis a known, and a wiſe ſaying of *Tacitus*; *Bonos Principes voto expetere debemus, qualeſcunque pati; & quomodo ſterilitatem, aut nimios imbres, & cætera Naturæ mala, ſic luxum & avaritiam dominantium tolerare.*

And this, in one word, is not only a ſatisfactory Anſwer, but an ample Confutation of that Peſtilent Book, (*Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos*) the ſcope whereof is, only to invite Subjects to rebel againſt Tyrannical Government, by repreſenting the evils of Tyranny: which though they were as great, as he ſuppoſes them to be; yet they are abundantly leſs than thoſe that follow upon Rebellion, as himſelf and his Party were ſufficiently taught by the *Event*. And for one Commonwealth, he can inſtance in, that has gain'd by Rebellion; 'tis eaſie to produce an hundred that it has hazarded, if not utterly ruined. And therefore this Author (not to mention *Mariana*, and *Buchanan*, and others) has perform'd nothing in behalf of his Cauſe, by diſplaying the miſeries of a *Tyrannical Power*, unleſs he had withal evinced them to be more calamitous than thoſe of War and Confuſion. There is nothing in this World, that depends upon the freedom of man's will, can be ſo ſecurely eſtabliſh'd, as not to be liable to ſad inconveniences; and therefore that Conſtitution of Affairs is moſt eligible, that is liable to the feweſt. And upon this ſcore, I ſay,

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it is that the Divine Law has ſo ſeverely injoin'd us to ſubmit to the worſt of Governours; becauſe notwithſtanding that Tyranny is an oppreſſing burden of Humane life, yet 'tis leſs intolerable than a ſtate of War and Confuſion.

Sect. 16. But to ſpeak more expreſly to the particular matter in debate, 'Tis neceſſary the world muſt be govern'd; govern'd it cannot be without Religion, & Religion, as harmleſs and peaceable as it is in it ſelf, yet when mixt with the Follies and Paſſions of men, it does not uſually inſpire them with overmuch gentleneſs and goodneſs of Nature; and therefore 'tis neceſſary that it ſubmit to the ſame Authority, that commands over all the other affections of the mind of man. And we may as well ſuppoſe all men juſt and honeſt, and upon that account cancel all the Laws of Equity, as ſuppoſe them wiſe and ſober in their Religious Conceits, and upon that ſcore take off all reſtraints from the exceſſes and enormities of Zeal. 'Tis therefore as neceſſary to the preſervation of Publick Peace, that men ſhould be govern'd in matters of Religion, as in all other common

common Affairs of Humane life. And as for all the inconveniences that may follow from it, they are no other, than what belong to all manner of Government, and ſuch as are, and muſt be, unavoidable, as long as mankind is endued with liberty of Will; for ſo long he cannot be intruſted with any Power, how good ſoever, that he may not abuſe. And therefore for men to go about to abrogate the *Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction* of the Civil Magiſtrate, becauſe he may abuſe it to evil and irreligious ends, by eſtabliſhing Idolatry, inſtead of the true Worſhip of God; (in which caſe 'tis pity that good men ſhould be expoſed to ruine, only for preſerving a good Conſcience) 'Tis juſt as reaſonable as if they ſhould caſhier all manner of Government, and ſet men free from all Oaths and Obligations of Allegiance; becauſe 'tis poſſible ſome Uſurper may gain the Supreme Power, and then force his Subjects to abjure all their former Oaths to their lawful Sovereign; and 'tis pity that men of the gallanteſt, and moſt honeſt Principles, ſhould be fined, decimated, hanged, baniſh'd, and Murdered only for their loyalty to their Prince.

And

And thus will the *Parallel* run equal in all Caſes between the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Authority of the Supreme Powers: both may be, and often are lamentably abuſed; and therefore if that be reaſon enough to aboliſh one, 'tis ſo to aboliſh both: ſo that the whole reſult of all amounts only to this Enquiry, Whether it would not be a politick courſe to take away all Government, becauſe all Government may be abuſed?

Sect. 17. Though this be a ſufficient reply to the Objection, yet it will not be altogether impertinent or unneceſſary to abet it with this one conſideration more. That it may, and often does ſo happen, that 'tis neceſſary to puniſh men for ſuch Perſwaſions into which they have perhaps innocently abuſed themſelves: for 'tis eaſily poſſible for well-meaning People through ignorance and inadvertency to be betrayed into ſuch unhappy Errors, as may tend to the Publick Diſturbance, which though it be not ſo much their Crime as Infelicity, yet is there no remedy but it muſt expoſe them to the Correction of the Publick Rods and Axes. Magiſtrates are to take

care

care of the Common-wealth, and not of every particular mans concerns: And the end of all their Laws is to provide for the welfare of the Publick, that is their Charge, and that they muſt ſecure; and if any harmleſs and well-meaning man make himſelf obnoxious to the Penalties of the Law, that is a misfortune they cannot prevent, and therefore muſt deal with him, as they do with all other Offenders; that is, pity, and puniſh him. Private intereſt muſt yield to Publick Good, and therefore, when they cannot ſtand together, and there is no remedy but one muſt ſuffer, 'tis better certainly that one, or a few, ſhould periſh than the whole Community. Neither is it poſſible that any Laws ſhould be ſo warily contrived, but that ſome innocent Perſons may ſometimes fall under their Penalties; yet, becauſe 'tis more beneficial to the Publick Welfare, that now and then a guiltleſs perſon ſhould ſuffer, than that all the guilty ſhould eſcape; in that the former injures but one, the latter all: Therefore is it neceſſary to govern all Societies by Laws, and Penalties, without regard to the ill fortune that may befal a few ſingle perſons, which

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can hardly be avoided whilſt the Laws are in force: and yet 'tis neceſſary that either the ſame, or ſome other in their ſtead be eſtabliſh'd, that will be liable to the ſame inconvenience. Beſides, 'tis not unworthy Obſervation, that it is not ſo properly the end of Government to puniſh Enormities, as to prevent Diſturbances; and when they bring Malefactors to Juſtice (as we term it) they do not ſo much inflict a Puniſhment upon the Crime, (for that belongs peculiarly to the cognizance of another Tribunal) as provide for the welfare of the Commonwealth, by cutting off ſuch Perſons as are Peſts and Enemies to it, and by the example of their Puniſhment deter others from the like Practices. And therefore there are ſome ſins, of which Governours take not ſo much notice, that are more hainous in themſelves, and in the ſight of God, than others that they puniſh with *Capital Inflictions*; becauſe they are not in their own nature ſo deſtructive of the ends of Government, and the good of *Publick Societies*. So that actions being puniſhable by Humane Laws, not according to the nature of the Crime, but of their ill conſequence

quence to the Publick, when any thing that is otherwiſe even innocent, is in this regard injurious, it as much concerns Authority to give it check by ſeverity of Laws and Puniſhments, as any the fouleſt Immoralities. Temporal Puniſhments then are inflicted upon ſuch perſons that are turbulent againſt preſcribed Rules of Publick Worſhip, upon the ſame account, as they are againſt thoſe that offend againſt all other Publick Edicts of Government: they are both equally intended, to ſecure the Publick Peace and Intereſt of the Society; and when either of them are violated, they equally tend to its diſturbance: and therefore as mens actings againſt the Civil Laws of a Common-wealth are obnoxious to the Judgment of its Governours, for the ſame reaſon are all their Offences againſt its Eccleſiaſtical Laws liable to the cenſure of the ſame Authority. So that the matter debated, in its laſt reſult, is not ſo much a queſtion of Religion, as of Policy; not ſo much of what is neceſſary to faith, as to the quiet and preſervation of a Common-wealth; and 'tis poſſible a man may be a good Chriſtian, and yet his Opinion be intolerable,

lerable, upon the ſcore of its being inconſiſtent with the Preſervation of the Publick Peace, and the neceſſary ends of Government. For 'tis eaſily imaginable how an honeſt and well-meaning man may, through meer ignorance, fall into ſuch Errours, which though God will pardon, yet Governours muſt puniſh: His integrity may expiate the Crime, but cannot prevent the Miſchief of his Errour. Nay ſo eaſie is it for men to deſerve to be puniſhed for their Conſciences, that there is no Nation in the world, in which (were Government rightly underſtood and duly managed) miſtakes and abuſes of Religion would not ſupply the *Gallies* with vaſtly greater numbers than Villany.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Nature and Obligations of Scandal, and of the Abſurdity of Pretending it, againſt the Commands of Lawful Authority.

The Contents.

THE Leaders of the Separation being aſham'd of the ſillineſs of the Principle, with which they abuſe the People, think to ſhelter themſelves, by flying to the pretence of Scandal. Scandal is any thing that occaſions the ſin of another, and is not in it ſelf determinately Good or Evil. All Scandal is equally taken, but not equally Criminal. Men are to govern themſelves, in this Affair,

Affair, by their own prudence and diſcretion. Of St. Paul's *contrary behaviour towards the Jews, and Gentiles, to avoid their contrary Scandal. The reaſon of the ſeeming Contradiction, in this point, between his Epiſtles to the* Romans, *and* Galatians. *The proper obligations of Scandal are extended only to indifferent things. The Caſes, in which it is concern'd, are not capable of being determined by ſetled Laws and Conſtitutions. How ſcandalouſly theſe men prevaricate with the World in their pretence of Scandal, that may excuſe their refuſal of Conformity, but gives no account of their Separation. Of their ſcrupling to renounce the Covenant, this is no reaſon to drive them from Divine Service into Conventicles. How ſhamefully theſe men juggle with the World, and impoſe upon their Followers. If they would but perſwade their Proſelytes to be of their own minds, it would end all our differences. They firſt lead the people into the Scandal, and then make this the formal reaſon why they muſt follow them. If the peoples ſcruples are groundleſs, then to comply with them, is to keep them in a*

ſinful diſobedience. A further account of their ſhameful prevarication. The ridiculouſneſs of the peoples pretending it concerning themſelves, that they are ſcandalized. By their avoiding private Offences, they run into publick Scandals. They ſcandalize their own weak Brethren moſt of all, by complying with them. Old and inveterate Scandals are not to be complyed with, but oppoſed: and ſuch are thoſe of the Non-Conformiſts. The Commands of Authority and the Obligations of Obedience infinitely outweigh, and utterly evacuate all the pretences of Scandal.

Sect. 1. THough the former Principle, *viz.* that no man may with a ſafe conſcience do any thing in the Worſhip of God, that is not warranted by ſome Precept or Precedent in the Word of God, be riveted into the peoples minds, as the firſt and fundamental Principle of the *Puritan Separation*; yet their Leaders ſeem to be aſhamed of their own folly: and being driven from this, and all their other little holds

holds and ſhelters, they have at length thought it the ſafeſt and the wiſeſt courſe to flie to the pretence of Scandal. This is their *Fort Royal*, in which they have at laſt ſecured and entrench'd themſelves. As for their own parts (they tell us) they are not ſo fond as to believe, That the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* are ſo ſuperſtitious, and Antichriſtian, and that themſelves might lawfully uſe them, were it not that there are great numbers of ſincere, but weak Chriſtians that apprehend them to be ſinful; and for this reaſon they dare not conform to our Ceremonial Conſtitutions, for fear of enſnaring and ſcandalizing weak Conſciences; which is, in the Apoſtles account of it, no leſs than *ſpiritual murther*. And whatever is due to Authority, the Souls of men are too high a Tribute. None can be more ready, than themſelves, to ſubmit to all lawful Commands; but here they deſire to be excuſed, when they cannot obey but at the price of Souls. 'Tis a dreadful Doom, that our Saviour has denounced againſt thoſe, who offend any of his *little ones*, *i. e.* Babes and Weaklings in Chriſtianity: And therefore, though they would not ſtick to hazard their own

lives in obedience to Authority, yet nothing can oblige them to be ſo cruel, and ſo uncharitable, as to deſtroy any for whom Chriſt died; which is certainly done by caſting ſnares and ſcandals before their weak Brethren. This is the laſt refuge of the Leaders of the Separation, and therefore I cannot but think my ſelf obliged to examine its ſtrength and reaſonableneſs; and I doubt not, but to make it appear as vain and frivolous, as all their other Cavils, and ſhuffling Pretences.

Sect. 2. Scandal then is a word of a large and ambiguous ſignification, and the thing it imports is not determinately either good or evil, but is ſometimes innocent, and ſometimes criminal, according to the different nature of thoſe things from whence it ariſes, or of thoſe circumſtances wherewith it is attended; for in the full and proper extent of the word, 'tis any thing (whether good, or evil, or indifferent) that occaſions the fall or ſin of another. Now if the matter of the Scandal, or that which occaſions anothers ſin, be in it ſelf good and vertuous, this caſual event is not ſufficient

cient to reflect any charge or diſparage-ment upon it; and therefore 'tis in Scripture frequently attributed to the beſt of things, to the Croſs of Chriſt, to Chriſt himſelf, and to the Grace of God. If it be a thing in it ſelf criminal, though it be chiefly blameable upon its own account, yet this uſually aggravates and enhances the original guilt of the action. But laſtly, if it be a thing indifferent, and a matter of Chriſtian liberty, then is it either faultleſs, or chargeable, according to its different Caſes and Circumſtances, as Chriſtian prudence and diſcretion ſhall determine, ſo various and contingent a thing not being capable to be govern'd by any fix'd and ſetled meaſures. Some are ſcandalized out of weakneſs, and ſome out of peeviſhneſs; ſome before due information of their miſtake, and ſome after it; ſome becauſe they do not, and ſome becauſe they will not underſtand. All which, with infinite other Circumſtances, men ought to conſider in the exerciſe of their Chriſtian liberty, and ſuitably to guide themſelves by the ſame Rules of Wiſdom and Charity, that determine them in all the other affairs of humane life. For the action it

ſelf is only the remote occaſion, and not the immediate cauſe of the ſcandal; in that, being in its own nature indifferent, and by conſequence innocent, it cannot be directly and from it ſelf productive of any criminal effect: and therefore, its being abuſed and perverted to purpoſes and opportunities of ſin, is purely accidental. And the proper and immediate cauſe of every mans falling, is ſomething within himſelf: 'Tis either folly, or malice, or ignorance, or wilfulneſs, too little underſtanding, or too much paſſion, that betray ſome men into ſin by occaſion of other mens actions. So that the Schools diſtinction of ſcandal into *paſſive* or that which is taken, and *active* or that which is given, is apparently falſe and impertinent, and is the main thing that has perplexed and intricated all diſcourſes of this Article: Becauſe Scandal, properly ſo called, is never given, but when it is taken; as being only an occaſion of offence taken by one man from the actions of another. Now if his taking offence, where it was not given, proceeds from weakneſs and ignorance, then is his caſe pitiable, and a good-natur'd man will out of tenderneſs and charity for-

bear

bear ſuch things, as he ſeizes on to abuſe to his own deſtruction: For all the obligations of Scandal proceed purely from that extraordinary height of Charity and tenderneſs of good Nature, that is ſo ſignally recommended in the Goſpel; which will oblige us to forbear any action that we may lawfully omit, when we know it will prove an occaſion of ſin and miſchief to ſome well-meaning, but leſs knowing Chriſtians. But if it proceed from humour, or pride, or wilfulneſs, or any other vicious Principle, then is the man to be treated as a peeviſh and ſtubborn perſon; and no man is bound to part with his own freedom, becauſe his Neighbour is froward and humorous: and if he be reſolved to fall, there is no reaſon I ſhould forego the uſe of my liberty, becauſe he is reſolved to make that his ſtumbling-block. So that we ſee all Scandal is equally taken, but not equally criminal: in that, ſome take it only becauſe they are weak, and ſome becauſe they are peeviſh; according to which different caſes we are to behave our ſelves, with a different demeanour in this affair.

§ 3. And for this we have variety of Examples in the practice of the Apoſtles, whoſe actions were liable to the oppoſite Scandals of Jews and Gentiles. If they complyed with the Jews in their rigorous Obſervation of the *Moſaick* Rites, this was a Scandal to the Gentiles, by leading them into a falſe and miſchievous opinion of their neceſſity: If they did not comply, then that proved a Scandal to thoſe *Jews*, that were not as yet fully inſtructed in the right nature, and extent of their Chriſtian liberty, and the diſſolution of the *Moſaick* Law; and ſo would be tempted to fall back from that Religion, that inclin'd men to a ſcorn and contempt of the Law of *Moſes*. Now between theſe two extremes they were forced to walk with great prudence and warineſs, inclining ſometimes to one, and ſometimes to the other; as they apprehended moſt beneficial to the ends & Intereſts of Chriſtianity. Thus though St. *Paul* condeſcended to the Circumciſion of *Timothy*, to humour and gratifie the Jews, who could not be ſo ſuddenly wrought off from the prejudices, and ſtrong impreſſions of their Education,

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and therefore were for a time indulged to the practice of their ancient Rites and Cuſtoms; Yet, when he was among the Gentiles, he would not be perſwaded to yield ſo far to the Jewiſh obſtinacy, as to ſuffer the Circumciſion of *Titus*, but oppoſed it with his utmoſt zeal and vehemence; becauſe this would in probability have fruſtrated the ſucceſs of all his labour in propagating the Goſpel among forein Nations; if he who had before ſo vehemently aſſerted their Chriſtian liberty, and inſtructed them in their freedom from the *Moſaick* Law, and particularly, from this Ceremony, ſhould now ſeem inconſiſtent with himſelf, by acting directly contrary to his former Doctrine, and bringing men into a ſubjection to the Law of *Moſes*, after himſelf had ſo often declared its being revers'd and ſuperannuated. For what elſe could be probably expected, than that his *Gentile Proſelytes* being diſcouraged, partly by his prevarication, and partly by the weight of that *Yoke*, to which they foreſaw, or at leaſt ſuſpected, they muſt ſubmit, ſhould be ſtrongly tempted to an utter *Apoſtacy?* And therefore, wiſely weighing with himſelf, that the ſcandal

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was leſs dangerous in angring the Jews, than in hazarding the Gentiles, he choſe rather to leave them to their own peeviſhneſs, than to hazard the revolt of theſe, *Gal.* 2. 4, 5.

§ 4. And this is the true reaſon (as ſome learned men have obſerved) of this great Apoſtles different deportment, in this particular, towards the Churches of *Rome* and *Galatia*; becauſe in the *Roman* Church there lived no ſmall number of natural Jews, who, when they were firſt converted to Chriſtianity, were not ſo well inſtructed in the abrogation of the *Moſaick* Law. The Method, whereby the Apoſtles invited them at firſt to embrace the Chriſtian Faith, was barely to convince them of its Evidence and Divine Authority; without taking any notice, whether their old Religion were thereby abrogated, or continued: For had they at the firſt attempt dealt roundly with them in that particular, that had been ſo far from winning their aſſent, that it had been abſolutely the moſt effectual way to affright them from the Goſpel. And from hence it came to paſs, that there were diſperſed among them ſo many Judaizing

daizing Christians, who, though they were sufficiently instructed in the positive Articles of the Christian Faith; yet not being so throughly informed as to the superannuating of those legal observances, they were as firmly wedded to them, as if they had still continued in the Jewish Religion: Therefore does the Apostle advise, That these weak and uninstructed Converts should be tenderly treated; and exhorts the more knowing Christians, for a while, to comply with their weakness and simplicity; till time, and better information should wear off their old prejudices, and at length bring them to a better understanding of their own liberty.

But then, as for the *Galatians*, when they hapned to fall into the same error, he thought not fit to treat them with the same tenderness and Civility: But rather chides and lashes them out of their childish folly; because (as St. *Chrysostome* observes) at their first Conversion they had been competently instructed in the extent of their Christian liberty, and had already disclaimed all their Jewish perswasions; and therefore, for them to relapse into the Errours of *Judaism*, could

could not proceed from weakneſs, and want of inſtruction, but from lightneſs and giddineſs of mind: a vanity that deſerved to be upbraided with as much briſkneſs and vehemence of Satyr, as St. *Paul* has us'd in that Epiſtle. And upon this account aroſe the Quarrel between him and St. *Peter*, in that St. *Peter* had not carried himſelf ſo prudently in the uſe of his Chriſtian liberty, as he might have done; their Controverſie was not about an Article of Faith, or a preſcribed Duty of Religion, but purely about an occaſional and changeable matter of prudence. But to paſs by this, and divers other particular caſes, to the ſame purpoſe, in the Writings of St. *Paul*, whoſe practice in this affair is the beſt Comment upon his Doctrine: the reſult of what I have diſcourſed from him evidently amounts to theſe two conſequences, (1.) That the proper obligations of Scandal are extended only to matters of an indifferent and arbitrary Nature. Thoſe things that are abſolutely neceſſary, we are bound to do, whether they offend any man or no; and thoſe that are abſolutely unlawful, we are bound to forbear, upon the ſcore of ſtronger obligations

gations than those of Scandal: and therefore its proper Scene must lie in things that are not determinately good or evil. (2.) That the cases, in which it is concern'd, are not capable of being determin'd by any unalterable Laws and Constitutions; and that we have no other Rules for the Government of our actions in reference to it, but those of common prudence and discretion. And now, from this more general account may we proceed, with more clearness and security, to some more close and particular considerations, that immediately relate to this affair, as 'tis pleaded by some men in justification of their present Schism.

§ 5. First, And here in the first place let me desire them, to consider how manifestly & scandalously they prevaricate with the World, in their management of this Apology, in that the Pretence is too narrow a Covering for their Practices. For however it may serve to excuse their refusal of Conformity in the Exercise of their Publick and Ministerial Function, which they must renounce, though to the ruine of their Families, to please the Brethren; yet how will this account

account for all the other diſorders and irregularities of their ſeparations? What has this to do with their private Meetings and Conventicles, againſt the Commands of publick Authority? They plead it only to juſtifie themſelves in laying down their Miniſtry, and not to keep them from being preſent at our Aſſemblies in a private capacity: (as they ſometimes are.) Why therefore ſhould they keep up ſuch an apparent Separation, by gathering people into diſtinct Meetings of their own, when they might without any criminal Scandal to their Brethren, or violence to their own Conſciences, be conſtant at our Congregations? When themſelves were (or at leaſt thought they were) in power, they did not think ſo ſlightly of unneceſſary Separations, but provided againſt their very appearances and poſſibilities: Why therefore ſhould they now make ſo light of expoſing the Church to all the diſtempers that naturally follow, upon making Parties and Diviſions? If there were nothing but Scandal in the caſe, they would live quietly and conformably in a private condition, though this might poſſibly reſtrain them from doing ſo in a publick

publick Office. And one would think that ſuch nice and tender-natur'd people, that will undo themſelves to pleaſe their Neighbours, ſhould be wonderfully tender of giving needleſs offence to their Governours.

And, whatever other pretences they make to excuſe their Non-conformity, nothing can juſtifie their Separation, but the unlawfulneſs of being preſent at our Congregations. For what, if they ſcruple to renounce the Covenant; is this any reaſon, why they ſhould gather people into Conventicles, keep their private Meetings in time of publick Service, affront the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Common-wealth, and encourage their Followers in a down-right Schiſm and Separation? It would be a pretty way of arguing, to hear one of them plead: I cannot renounce the Covenant, therefore I muſt keep a Conventicle; and yet this is their method of acting. And therefore they can never clear themſelves of ſome odd ſuſpicions, unleſs they would frankly and openly declare their opinion of our *Service*: If they think it unlawful, then let them own, and profeſs, and plead it; if lawful, then let them juſtifie them-

themſelves, in that, when lawful Authority requires them, and the people, to keep up a juſt and lawful Communion with the Church, yet they ſhould notwithſtanding keep up ſo wide a Schiſm, by gathering people out of publick Congregations into private Meetings. And could their credulous Diſciples be but made ſenſible, how coarſly they are impos'd upon by their Leaders, and how lamentably they juggle and diſſemble with the World, they would then more abhor them for their *Hypocriſie*, than they now admire them for their Saint-like and demure pretences. For if they would perſwade them to do what themſelves would not ſcruple in their Circumſtances, (*i. e.* to be of their own mind) this Schiſm would quickly be ended, and the Church ſetled. The only reaſon (ſay moſt of them) why they forſook their Miniſtry was, That they durſt not abjure the Covenant; diſpenſe with them for this, and they are Conformiſts. But if that be the only thing they ſcruple, then, Why are they not regular and conformable in all other Particulars, againſt which they can pretend no ſuch Exceptions? And what does renouncing the

the Covenant concern the people? And therefore how ſhall that excuſe, or juſtifie them in their Separation? This thing has no relation to the Divine Service, and therefore, however it may reſtrain men from ſomething elſe, 'tis no motive to drive them from that. Now what can be more apparent, than that theſe men are reſolved to comply with, and encourage, the people in a wicked and rebellious Schiſm, (for ſo it muſt be, if it be groundleſs and unwarrantable) by herding them into Conventicles for their own private ends, and that in ſpight of Authority? Whereas had they any true ſenſe of Conſcience and ingenuity, they would labor to diſpoſſeſs the people of their miſtakes, and to reconcile them to a fair and candid opinion of the Church, when ſhe requires nothing of them, but what they themſelves are convinced in Conſcience, is lawful and innocent. For, if they valued the Peace of the Church, the Commands of Authority, and the ſetlement of the Nation before their own ſelfiſh ends, inſtead of keeping up Diviſions (as 'tis evident they do by their Conventicles) they would be as zealous, as he that is moſt ſo; to remove the grounds

of Schiſm and Faction, and to reunite their Party to the Church, by perſwading them to an orderly and peaceable Conformity. Which if it be innocent (as themſelves believe it is) it muſt, in the preſent Circumſtances of Affairs, be neceſſary; if it be any mans Duty to be peaceable in the Church, and obedient to lawful Authority.

Sect. 6. Secondly, How came the people to be ſcandalized? by whom were they betrayed, and affrighted into their miſtakes? Who buzzed their ſcruples, and jealouſies into their heads? And, Who taught them to call our Ceremonies, Popiſh, Superſtitious, and Antichriſtian? What other inducement have they to diſlike the Churches Conſtitutions, but meerly the example of their Leaders? Their practice is the only Foundation of the peoples opinion; and when their flocks ſtraggle from *our* Churches, 'tis only to follow *their* Paſtors: They firſt lead the people into an Errour, and then this muſt be an Apology for themſelves to follow them. And thus, whilſt they dance in a Circle, 'tis no wonder, if at the ſame time, their Preachers follow their

their people, and the people follow their Preachers. And therefore if the *Godly Miniſters*, who dare not conform for fear of ſcandalizing the weak Brethren, would but venture to do it, the weak Brethren would ceaſe to be ſcandalized. So that theſe men firſt lay the ſtumbling-block in the peoples way, and then, becauſe it ſcares ſilly and timorous Souls, this ſerves for a pretence to ſtartle, & be aſtoniſh'd at it themſelves, and withal to increaſe the childiſh fears of the multitude by their own ſeeming & counterfeit horror. Now with what a ſhameleſs Brow do theſe men prevaricate with publick Authority? They have deceived the people into a publick Errour, and then will not undeceive them for fear of their diſpleaſure: And when they have poſſeſs'd their minds with unworthy ſcruples, and jealouſies againſt the commands of their Superiors, then muſt this weakneſs of the people be made the *Formal Excuſe* of their own diſobedience. And by this Artifice they proſtitute the Reverence of all Government to the fortuitous humor and peeviſhneſs of their own Diſciples; and ſo by making the publick Laws ſub-

mit to the pleaſure of thoſe whom they govern, they put it in their own power to enact, or repeal them as they pleaſe; and no Law ſhall have any force to bind the Subject without their approbation: Becauſe 'tis in their own power, when they pleaſe, to work prejudices, in the people againſt it; and therefore, if their being offended be ſufficient to take off their obligation, 'tis, or 'tis not a Law, only as themſelves ſhall think good. And thus they firſt govern the Common people, & then ſooth and flatter their pride, by inveigling them into a conceit, that they are govern'd by them, and by this ſtratagem they govern all.

But however, from whomſoever theſe good people learn'd their idle & imaginary ſcruples, the offence they have taken againſt the Cuſtoms and Preſcriptions of the Church, is either juſt and reaſonable, or it is not: If the former, then they have rational grounds for their diſlike & ſeparation; and if they have, then theſe men that think themſelves bound to comply with them, even againſt the commands of Authority, ought to plead thoſe Reaſons, and not meerly Scandal,

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to juſtifie their diſobedience; becauſe they muſt carry in them an obligation antecedent to that of Scandal; in that they are ſuppoſed ſufficient to warrant and patronize it; and therefore 'tis not that, but the grounds, on which their diſlike is founded, that are to be pleaded in their defence and juſtification. But if the latter, then is their diſlike groundleſs, and unreaſonable: And if ſo, 'tis eaſie to determine that they ought rather to undeceive them, by diſcovering their miſtake, than to encourage them in their ſinful diſobedience, (for ſo it muſt be, if it be groundleſs) by compliance with them. And by this means they will fairly diſcharge themſelves from all danger of any criminal offence. For however ſcandal groundleſly taken (and ſo it is always, becauſe there is never any reaſon to be offended at an indifferent thing) may poſſibly lay a reſtraint upon my liberty, till I have informed the perſon of his Error, and diſavowed thoſe ill conſequences he would draw from my example; and when I have ſo done, I have prevented the danger of Scandal, which always ſuppoſes errour, weakneſs, or miſtake of Conſci-

ence; and therefore when the Errour is discovered, and the weakness removed, so is the scandal too: And if he shall still pretend to be scandalized, 'tis not because he is weak, but peevish; and if after this I comply with them, and that against the commands of my lawful Superiors, I shall disobey Authority, only, because my Neighbour is unreasonable, *i. e.* for no reason at all. And this further discovers, how shamelessly these men shuffle and prevaricate with the world; in that when most of them have declared, in their private Discourses, that they are not so fond as to imagine our Ceremonies unlawful, or *Antichristian*, and when their Grandees and Representatives have profess'd to publick Authority in *Solemn Conferences*, that they scruple not these things upon their own account, but only for fear of giving offence to some well-meaning people that were unhappily possess'd with some odd and groundless jealousies against them. For if so, Then why are not these good people, that follow them, better informed? Why do they not instruct them in the truth, and disabuse them out of their

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falſe and abſurd conceits? Why do they connive at their pride and preſumption? Or at leaſt, Why do they not more ſmartly reprove them, for their raſhneſs to cenſure the actions of their Neighbours, to condemn, and revile the Wiſdom of their Superiors, and to ſcorn the Knowledge of their Spiritual Inſtructors? Why do they not chide them out of their malepart, peeviſh, and impatient confidence, and, by convincing them at leaſt of the poſſibility of their being deceived, reduce them to a more humble and governable temper? Why do they not teach them in plain terms that the eſtabliſh'd way of Worſhip is lawful, and innocent, and therefore that they ought not to forſake it, to the diſturbance of the Church, and contempt of Authority? If they would but make it part of their buſineſs to undeceive the people, how eaſily would all their ſtragling Followers return into the Communion of the Church? But they dare not let them know their Errours, leſt they ſhould forfeit both their Party, and their Reputation: And therefore, inſtead of that, they rather confirm them in their miſtakes, and in their own defence,

are forced to perſwade them, that they ought to be ſcandalized. Inſomuch, that it is not unuſual to hear the fooliſh people pretend it concerning themſelves, and to tell you that your action is a Scandal to them: By which they mean, either that it leads them into ſin, or that it makes them angry. If the former, that is a ridiculous contradiction; for if they know how the ſnare and temptation is laid, then they know how to eſcape it; my action does not force them into the ſin, but only invites them to it, through their own miſtake and folly: And therefore if they have diſcovered, by what miſtake they are likely to be betray'd, they know how to provide againſt the danger: For, if they know their duty in the caſe, how can they plead Scandal, when that ſuppoſes ignorance? And however I behave my ſelf, they know what they have to do themſelves: If they do not, How can they ſay of themſelves, that they are ſcandalized; when by ſo ſaying they confeſs they are not? For that implies a knowledge how to do their duty, and avoid the danger. If the latter, *i. e.* that they are angry, then all their meaning is, that I muſt part with my liberty, and

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diſobey my Superiors to pleaſe them; that their ſaucy humour muſt give me Law; that I muſt be their Slave, becauſe they are proud, and inſolent; and that they muſt gain a power over me, becauſe they are forward to cenſure mine actions.

§ 7. Thirdly, We encounter Scandal with Scandal, and let the guilt of all be diſcharged upon that ſide that occaſions the moſt and the greateſt offences: Now all the miſchief they can pretend to enſue, in the preſent conſtitution of affairs, upon their compliance with Authority, reaches no farther than the weak Brethren of their own Party; whereas by their refractory diſobedience they give offence not only to them, but to all, both to the Jew, and to the Gentile, and to the Church of God. And, not to inſiſt upon the advantages they give to Atheiſm and Popery, let me only mind them, that if the accidental offence of the Judgments of ſome well-meaning, but leſs knowing Chriſtians, of a private capacity, paſs a ſufficient obligation upon Conſcience, to reſtrain it from any practice in it ſelf lawful; of how much more

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force muſt that ſcandal be, that is given to publick Authority, by denying obedience to its lawful commands, and by conſequence infringing its juſt power in things not forbidden by any divine Law? Now if the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England* were in themſelves apparently evil, then their repugnancy to the Law of God were ſufficient Objection both againſt their practice, and their impoſition; and their ſcandal to weak and ignorant Chriſtians were of ſmall force, in compariſon to their intrinſick, and unalterable unlawfulneſs: But, becauſe this is not pretended in our preſent caſe, What a ſhameful ſcandal and reproach to Religion is it, to neglect the neceſſary duty of Obedience, and ſubjection to lawful Authority, under pretence of complyance with the weak and groundleſs ſcruples of ſome private men? 'Tis certainly paſt diſpute, that the reaſonable offence of ſome weaker Brethren cannot ſo ſtrongly oblige our Conſciences, as the indiſpenſable command of obeying our lawful Superiors. And it is a ſhame to demand, Whether the Judgment of a lawful Magiſtrate have not more force and power over

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Conſcience, than the Judgment of every private Chriſtian: If not, then may the Laws of Authority be cancell'd, and controul'd by the folly and ignorance of thoſe that are ſubject to them; for meer ſcandal ariſes only from the folly and ignorance of the perſons offended. For if there be any juſt and wiſe occaſion of diſlike, the action becomes primarily unlawful, not becauſe 'tis ſcandalous, but becauſe 'tis antecedently evil; whereas meer and proper ſcandal is only concern'd in things in themſelves indifferent: So that in this caſe all the difficulty is, Whether is the greater ſcandal, to do an indifferent thing, when a private Chriſtian diſlikes it; or not to do it, when publick Authority enjoyns it? And certainly it can be no Controverſie, Whether it be a fouler reproach to Religion, to diſobey a Chriſtian Magiſtrate in a thing lawful and indifferent, than to offend a private Chriſtian. And I may ſafely appeal to the Judgment of all wiſe and ſober men, Whether the intolerable waywardneſs of ſome nice and ſqueamiſh Conſciences to the commands of juſt Authority, be not a fouler and more notorious ſcandal to Religion, than a modeſt

deſt and humble compliance with them, though in things not ſo apparently uſeful and neceſſary?

And then, as for their own weak Brethren, of whom they ſeem ſo exceedingly tender, they can no way more ſcandalize them, than by complying with them: By which they are tempted and betray'd into the greateſt and moſt miſchievous enormities; for thereby they encourage their folly, feed and cheriſh their ungrounded fancies, confirm them in a falſe opinion of the unlawfulneſs of their Superiors commands, and ſo lead them directly into the ſins of unwarrantable Schiſm and Diſobedience. How many feeble and deluded Souls are enticed, by the reputation of their example, to violate the commands of Authority, and that, when themſelves are not convinced of their unlawfulneſs, and ſo entangle themſelves in a complicated ſin, by diſobeying their lawful Superiors, and that with a doubtful and unſatisfied Conſcience? They cannot be ignorant, that the greateſt part of their zealous Diſciples are offended at the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Church, for no other reaſon, than becauſe they ſee their

godly

godly Miniſters to ſlight them; and therefore, unleſs their example be ſufficient to reſcind the lawful Commands of their Governors, they give them the moſt criminal Scandal, by inviting them to the moſt criminal diſobedience. So that all circumſtances fairly conſidered, the avoiding of offences will prove the moſt effectual inducement to Conformity: For this would take away the very Grounds and Foundations of Scandal, remove all our differences, prevent much trouble and more ſin, cure all our Schiſms, Quarrels, and Diviſions, baniſh our mutual Jealouſies, Cenſures, and Animoſities, and eſtabliſh the Nation in a firm and laſting Peace. In brief, the only cauſe of all our troubles and diſturbances, is, the inflexible perverſneſs of about an hundred proud, ignorant, and ſeditious Preachers; againſt whom, if the ſeverity of the Laws were particularly levelled, How eaſie would it be in ſome competent time to reduce the people to a quiet and peaceable temper, and to make all our preſent Schiſms (that may otherwiſe prove eternal) expire with, or before, the preſent Age? The want, or neglect, of which method, is

the

the only thing, that has given them ſo much ſtrength, & ſo long a continuance.

§ 8. Fourthly, No man is bound to take notice of, or give place to old and inveterate ſcandals, but rather ought, in defence of his Chriſtian liberty, to oppoſe them with a publick defiance, and to ſhame thoſe that pretend them out of their confidence. For the only ground of compliance and condeſcenſion in theſe Caſes, is tenderneſs and compaſſion to ſome mens infirmities; and as long as I have reaſon to think this the only cauſe of their being ſcandalized, ſo long am I bound by charity and good nature to condeſcend to their weakneſſes, and no longer: For after they have had a competent time and means of better information, I have reaſon enough to preſume, that 'tis not ignorance, that is the gound of their taking offence, but pride or peeviſhneſs, or ſomething worſe. So that all that is to be done in this caſe, is to diſabuſe the weak by rectifying his judgment, removing his ſcruples, declaring the innocence of my action, clearing it of all ſiniſter ſuſpicions, and proteſting againſt all thoſe abuſes, he would put upon

upon the lawful uſe of my Chriſtian liberty: And when I have ſo done, I have cleared my ſelf from all his ill-natured jealouſies and ſurmiſes, and diſcharged all the offices and obligations of Charity. And if, after all this, my offended Neighbor ſhall ſtill perſevere in his perverſe miſ-interpretation of my actions, and pretend, that they ſtill gaul and enſnare his tender Conſcience; the man is peeviſh and refractory, and only makes uſe of this precarious pretence, to juſtifie his uncharitable cenſures of my innocent liberty; and then am I ſo far from being under any obligation to comply with the peeviſhneſs and inſolence of his humour, that I am ſtrongly bound to thwart and oppoſe it. For otherwiſe I ſhould but betray my Chriſtian liberty to the Tyranny of his wilful and imperious ignorance, and give ſuperſtitious folly the advantage and Authority of Preſcription. For if that prevail in the practice of the World, and I muſt yield and condeſcend to it, becauſe 'tis ſtubborn, and obſtinate, it muſt, in proceſs of time, gain the reputation of being the cuſtom and received opinion of the *Church*; and when it can plead that, then

then it becomes neceſſary: Inveterate Errours are ever ſacred and venerable, and what preſcription warrants, it always impoſes: Cuſtom ever did, and ever will rule and preſide in the practices of men, becauſe 'tis popular; and being ever attended with a numerous train of Followers, it grows proud and confident, and is not aſhamed to upbraid free reaſon with ſingularity and Innovation. So that all I could gain, by an abſolute reſignation of my own liberty to another mans folly, would be only to give him a plauſible pretence to claim a right of command and dominion over me, and to make my ſelf ſubject to his humour by my own civility. And thus, though the Jews were in the beginning of Chriſtianity for a time permitted the Rites and Cuſtoms of their Nation; yet afterward when the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion was, or might be, better underſtood, the Church did not think it owed them ſo much civility: And if the Primitive Chriſtians had not given check to their ſtubborn perſwaſions, they had given them Authority; and, by too long a compliance, would have vouched and abetted their Errours, and adopted Judaiſm

daiſm into Chriſtianity; and Circumciſion not only might, but of neceſſity muſt have been conveyed down to us from age to age, by as firm and uninterrupted a Tradition as Baptiſm.

And this ſhews us, how way-ward and unreaſonable thoſe men are, who ſtill perſevere to object Scandal againſt the Churches Conſtitutions, after ſhe has ſo often proteſted againſt this Exception by ſo many ſolemn Declarations. When at firſt it was pretended, it might perhaps for a while excuſe, or alleviate their diſobedience; but after Authority has ſo ſufficiently ſatisfied their ſcruples, and removed their ſuſpicions, and ſo amply cleared the innocence of its own intentions, if men will ſtill continue jealous and quarrelſom, they may thank themſelves if they ſmart for their own preſumption and folly. And Princes have no reaſon to abridge themſelves in the exerciſe of their lawful Power, only, becauſe ſome of their Subjects will not learn to be modeſt and ingenuous. And if his Majeſty ſhould think good to condeſcend ſo far to theſe mens peeviſhneſs, as to reverſe his Laws againſt them out of compliance with them, this would but feed

and cheriſh their inſolence, and only encourage them to proceed (if that be poſſible) to more unreaſonable demands; for upon the ſame reaſon they inſiſt upon theſe, they may, when they are granted them, go on to make new remonſtrances, *i. e.* upon no reaſon at all. And beſide, this would but give the countenance of Authority to their ſcruples and ſuperſtitious pretences, and leave the Church of *England* under all thoſe Calumnies to Poſterity, with which themſelves or their followers labour to charge it, and oblige future Ages to admire and celebrate theſe peeviſh and ſeditious perſons as the *Founders* of a more godly and thorow Reformation. Not to mention how much Princes have ever gain'd by their conceſſions to the demands of Fanatick Zealots, they may eaſily embolden, but hardly ſatisfie them; and if they yield up but one Jewel of their Imperial Diadem to their importunity, 'tis not uſual for them to reſt, till they have gain'd Crown and all, and perhaps the head that wears it too; for there is no end of the madneſs of unreaſonable men. How happy would the world be, if wiſe men were but wiſe enough to be inſtructed by the

Miſtreſs

Miſtreſs of Fools? But every Age lives as much at all adventure as if it were the firſt, without any regard to the warnings and experiences of all former Ages.

Sect. 9. Fifthly, The Commands of Authority, and the Obligations of Obedience, infinitely outweigh, and utterly evacuate all the pretences of ſcandal. For the matters wherein ſcandal is concern'd are only things indifferent; but nothing that is not antecedently ſinful remains ſo, after the commands of lawful Authority are ſuperinduced upon it; theſe change things indifferent, *as to their Nature*, into neceſſary Duties, *as to their Uſe*; and therefore place them beyond the reach of the obligations of ſcandal, that may in many caſes extend to the reſtraint of our Liberty, but never to the prejudice and hinderance of our Duty; ſo that no Obedience, how offenſive ſoever, unleſs it be upon ſome other account faulty, is capable of being made Criminal upon the ſcore of ſcandal; the obligations whereof are but accidental and occaſional, whereas thoſe of Obedience are of a prime, abſolute, and eternal neceſſity. Princes are Gods Deputies, and Lieute-

nants here on earth, he veſts them with their power, and by his own Law binds us to obey theirs; and though their Decrees paſs no *direct Obligation* upon the Conſciences of men, yet the Divine laws directly and immediately bind their Conſciences to obey them; and God has annex'd the ſame Penalties to Diſobedience to their Laws, as to his own: So that obedience to all the lawful Commands of our Superiours is one part of our Duty to God, becauſe our obligation to it is tied upon us by his own immediate Command: aud therefore if the duty of avoiding ſcandal, that is of Compliance with my neighbours weakneſs, be ſufficient to excuſe that of Obedience to Authority, 'tis ſo too to take off the immediate Obligations of God himſelf: So that when theſe two, the publick commands of a lawful Superiour, and the private Offence of an honeſt Neighbour countermand each other, if the latter prevail, then may it forbid what God has made a neceſſary Duty, and oblige us to diſobey him out of Compliance with the folly and ignorance of men. How few are there of the Divine Laws more ſevere and peremptory, than thoſe that com-

command Obedience to Authority? And therefore if we may decline this duty only to avoid ſcandal, Why not any? Why not all? This then is our Duty, and muſt be done; and as for all its caſual and equivocal events, no mans Conſcience is concern'd to provide againſt them. And if other men will be offended becauſe I do my Duty, that is their fault and not mine; and better be the occaſion of another mans ſin, than the Author of mine own. No mans folly or ignorance can cancel my obligations to God, or God's Vicegerent; and in all caſes where there is any competition between ſcandal and a Command of God, or any other lawful Authority, there is no other difficulty to be reſolved, than, whether I ſhall diſobey God, or diſpleaſe my fooliſh Neighbour? And 'tis (one would think) paſt all diſpute, that when any thing is poſitively determin'd as a matter of Duty, the obligations to Obedience in that particular are not, for that very reaſon, left to any man's Choice and Prudence (as all matters of Scandal are) but it muſt become in all Caſes and Circumſtances whatſoever, a Duty of a preciſe abſolute, and indiſpenſable Neceſſity,

And certainly God had made but odd proviſion for the Government of the World, if he ſhould allow one Subject, for the pleaſure of another, to derogate from the Authority of lawful Superiours, and permit them the liberty to diſobey the Commands of Governours, rather than diſpleaſe one another: for this muſt unavoidably end in an utter diſſolution of all Government, & devolve the Supremacy entirely upon every private man, that either has or can pretend to have a weak and a tender Conſcience. For if ſcandal to weak and tender Conſciences be of ſufficient force to reſcind the obligatory Power of the Commands of Authority, then whoever either has, or can pretend to a weak Conſcience, gains thereby an abſolute Sovereignty over all his Superiours, and veſts himſelf with a power to diſpenſe with or evacuate their Commands. So that in the iſſue of all, this pretence puts it in the power of any peeviſh or malevolent perſon to cancel all the Decrees of Princes, and make his own humour the Rule of all their Polity and Laws of Government, and become Superior to his own Superiours only by being ignorant or peeviſh. How is it

poſſible

poſſible to make Authority more cheap and contemptible (if men would ſtudy to weaken and diſgrace it) than by making its Commands of leſs force, than the folly or perverſeneſs of every arrogant Mechanick? And what can be more deſtructive of all manner of Government than to make all the Rules of Order and Diſcipline leſs ſacred, than the whimſies of every phantaſtick Zealot? In brief, the peace and quiet of honeſt men is likely to be mighty well ſecured, when diſobedience ſhall be thought the product of a more exact and tender Conſcience; When to pick quarrels with the Laws, and make ſcruple of obeying them ſhall be made the ſpecifick Character of the *Godly Party*; and when giddy and humorous Zeal ſhall not only excuſe, but hallow Diſobedience; when every one, that has pride enough to fancy himſelf a *Child of God*, ſhall have Licence to deſpiſe Authority and do as he liſt. What an irreſiſtible temptation is this to proud and zealous Enthuſiaſts, to affect being troubleſome to Government, and diſobedient to all the Laws of Diſcipline, when it ſhall paſs for the reſult of a more extraordinary tenderneſs of Conſcience?

What encouragement could men have to obey their Superiours, when to diſpute and diſlike their Laws ſhall be thought to proceed from a greater holineſs and a more exact integrity? And what a reſiſtleſs inducement is this to all proud and phantaſtick Zealots to remonſtrate to the Wiſdom of Authority, if thereby they may gain the Renown and Glory of a more *conſpicuous godlineſs*? If men would but conſider the natural Conſequences of this, and the like Pretences, they could not but ſee how fatally and unavoidably they lead to Anarchy, and an utter diſſolution of all Government. Which miſchief (as is notoriouſly apparent from the Premiſſes) all the World can never prevent, if the *ſcandal* of Private men may ever diſpence with the Obligation of Publick Laws.

CHAP.

Chap. VIII.

Of the Pretence of a Tender and unſatisfied Conſcience; the Abſurdity of Pleading it in Oppoſition to the Commands of Publick Authority.

The Contents.

This pretence is but an after-game of Conſcience. 'Tis a certain and unavoidable diſſolution of Government. 'Tis a ſuperannuated Pretence, and is become its own Confutation: Old Scruples proceed not from Tenderneſs, but Stubborneſs of Conſcience. This particularly ſhewn in their ſcruple of kneeling at the Communion. They affect their Scruples out of Pride and Vain-

Vain-glory. Tenderneſs of Conſcience is ſo far from being the reaſon of Diſobedience, that it lays upon us the ſtrongeſt Obligations to Obedience. A Tender Conſcience is ever of a yielding and pliable temper. When 'tis otherwiſe, 'tis nothing but humour or inſolence, and is uſually hardy enough not to ſcruple the greateſt Villanies. The Commands of Publick Authority abrogate all doubts and ſcruples, and determine all irreſolution of Conſcience. The matter of all ſcruples is too ſmall to weigh againſt the Sin and Miſchief of Diſobedience. The Apoſtles Apology, viz. We ought to obey God rather than men, *holds only in matters of great and apparent Duty, but not in doubtful and diſputable Caſes. Nothing more eaſie than to raiſe ſcruples. No Law can eſcape them, this particularly ſhewn in our own Laws. When two Obligations interfere, the greater always cancels the leſs. Hence 'tis impoſſible for any man to be reduced into a neceſſity of Sinning. Obedience to Publick Authority is one of the greateſt and moſt indiſpenſable Duties of Mankind, becauſe moſt neceſſary to their well-*

well-being. To act againſt our own ſcruples, out of obedience to Authority, is an eminent inſtance of virtue. In caſes of a Publick Concern, men are to be govern'd not by their own private, but by the publick Judgment. In theſe matters the Commands of Publick Authority are the Supreme Rules of Conſcience. There is a vaſt difference between Liberty and Authority of Conſcience. The Puritans tenderneſs of Conſcience is one of the rankeſt ſort of Hereſies. Wherefore 'tis abſolutely neceſſary for Authority to command things indifferent. The Concluſion of all.

Sect. I. THE laſt refuge for *Godly Diſobedience* is the pretence of a poubtful, ſcrupulous, & unſatisfied conſcience; for (ſay they) though we cannot poſitively condemn the Ceremonial Conſtitutions of the Church, as things in themſelves unlawful, yet unlawful they are to us, whoſe Conſciences are not ſufficiently ſatisfied concerning them; becauſe whatſoever is done with a doubting Conſcience, *i. e.* without

without Faith, or a full perſwaſion of mind, is done againſt it: according to that clear and unqueſtionable Maxim of St. *Paul, Whatſoever is not of Faith, is ſin.*

But this precarious pretence, as well as that of ſcandal, is but an after-game of Conſcience; they firſt reſolved to quarrel our Conſtitutions, and then 'tis an eaſie matter to want ſatisfaction about them; and when mens Arguments depend upon their Wills, 'tis in their own power only to repeal them, and all the Reaſon in the world can never cure willful and artificial Scruples. However, if the obligation of Laws muſt yield to that of a weak and tender Conſcience, how impregnably is every man, that has a mind to diſobey, arm'd againſt all the Commands of his Superiours? No Authority ſhall be able to govern him, farther than himſelf pleaſes, and if he diſlike the Law, he is ſufficiently excuſed from all obligations to Obedience; and no Laws ſhall ever be able to oblige any man, that either has, or can pretend to a weak Conſcience: for ſeeing no man can diſcern the reality of mens pretenſions, 'tis all one to the Concernments of Government, whether the tenderneſs

of

of Conſcience, that men plead to excuſe their diſobedience, be ſerious or counterfeit: For, whether it be ſo, or ſo, 'tis directly contrary to all the ends and intereſts of Government. And if it be admitted for a ſufficient excuſe to diſobey, 'tis an effectual and incurable diſſolution of all the force of Laws, and makes them obligatory then only when every man pleaſes; and he that will may obey, and he that will not may chuſe; ſeeing 'tis ſo eaſie for any man, that has no inclination to the Law, to claim the inviolable Priviledge of a *tender Conſcience*: So that to make *Proviſo*'s for tender Conſciences, is to *abate* the whole Law; ſeeing it gives every man liberty to exempt himſelf, and if he diſlike the Law, he is under no Obligation to obey it. But ſuppoſe this pretence to be ſerious without deſign or diſguiſe, is it fit the Laws of the Common-wealth ſhould ask leave of every Ignorant, and Well-meaning man, whether they ſhall be Laws or no? A weak Conſcience is the product of a weak Underſtanding; and he is a very ſubtil man, that can find the difference between a tender Head, and a tender Conſcience: and therefore if

Princes

Princes must consult their Subjects Consciences in all their Laws, this would make all the Wisdom of Government submit to the power of folly and ignorance. And when any person pleads weakness or tenderness of Conscience against the obligation of any Law, his meaning is, that he is not of the same Judgment and Opinion with his Governours; and 'tis wise, and handsom, and becoming the *Grandeur* of Authority in all its Laws, to comply with the learned apprehensions of every honest and illiterate Peasant; who if he be not satisfied in their determinations, may cancel their obligations as to himself, and if they offer to force this honest man to submission, they invade the sacred and inviolable liberty of a tender Conscience. So full of *Anarchy* are all these mens pretences. And therefore Governours must look to the Publick, and let tender Consciences look to themselves. Laws must be of an unyielding and inflexible temper, and not such soft and easie things, as to bend to every mans humour, that they ought to command. And unless Government be managed by some setled Principles, it must for ever remain

remain weak and unfixed: Princes muſt not be diffident in their Rules, and Maxims of Policy; but as they muſt ſet down ſome to themſelves, ſo they muſt act up roundly to them. For all Changes of the Publick Laws and Methods of Policy ſadly weaken, if they do not utterly unſettle the Common-wealth; in that *Preſcription* is, at leaſt in the practice of the World, the greateſt ſtrength and ſecurity of Government: 'tis indeed the Fountain of Authority, and the thing that veſts Princes with their Prerogatives; and no Power, what right or title ſoever it may plead, can ever be firmly eſtabliſh'd, till it can plead the Warrant and Authority of Preſcription: And therefore if Princes will be reſolute (and if they will Govern, ſo they muſt be) they may eaſily make the moſt ſtubborn Conſciences bend to their Commands; but if they will not, they muſt ſubmit themſelves, and their Power, to all the follies and paſſions of their Subjects. For there are no conceits ſo extravagant, or ſo pernicious, that may not paſs for Principles of Conſcience. In brief, there is nothing ſo ungovernable as a tender Conſcience, or ſo reſtive and inflexible as folly

folly or wickedneſs, when hardned with Religion: and therefore inſtead of being complyed with, they muſt be reſtrain'd with a more peremptory and unyielding rigour, than naked and unſanctified Villany; elſe will they quickly diſcover themſelves to be pregnant with greater and more fatal dangers.

Sect. 2. This ſtale pretence comes now too late, and is ſo ancient, that 'tis long ſince ſuperannuated: old Doubts and ſcruples are like old ſcandals worn out of date by time and experience: They are the natural products of ignorance, weakneſs is their Parent, and folly their Nurſe; and if they improve not into Confidence, they never ſurvive their *Infancy*, but of themſelves vaniſh and diſſolve into nothing: And therefore this pretence having out-lived it ſelf, is become its own Anſwer and Confutation: Becauſe men ought not, nay, they cannot remain ſo long under *Uncertainties*; and 'tis impoſſible but they ſhould before this time be competently determined, as to the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of the things themſelves: For if in ſo long a time they have not been able to diſcover

that

that ſinfulneſs in them they ſuſpected, that is ſufficient evidence of their being *Innocent*; becauſe their ſcruples have occaſioned them to be ſo throughly ſifted and examined: And if after all that hot and vehement contention, that has been raiſed about them, it appears not yet wherein they are criminal and chargeable, (for if it does, then the doubt ceaſes, and the certainty, not the ſuſpition of ſin is to be objected) that is preſumption enough for any modeſt and ſober man to conclude their innocence; and ſtill to retain the ſcruple, is folly and peeviſhneſs, and then the *Conſcience* is not doubtful, but obſtinate and peremptory: The man is reſolved to cheriſh his ſcruple, and perſiſt in his folly; and if he will not be ſatisfied, it is not becauſe he is weak and timorous, but becauſe he is ſtubborn and diſ-ingenuous. And then he pretends Conſcience only to vouch his humour, and his inſolence, *i. e.* he is a villain and an hypocrite; and is ſo far from deſerving pity, eſpecially from Authority, that no offenders can more need or provoke their ſeverity; in that, ſuch men reſolve to tire out their Governors by their inflexible ſtubbornneſs, and to affront

their Laws with trifles and contemptuous Exceptions.

At the firſt ſetlement of a Church or new Religion, then indeed mens old follies, prejudices, and weakneſſes, ought to be charitably conſidered; and they are not to be forced into new Cuſtoms and Uſages, by too much rigor and ſeverity; but ought to be gently and tenderly treated, till time and better information may wear off their ſcruples, and little exceptions. And this was the caſe of the *Jews* in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, who were at firſt indulged in their weak and trifling conceits; becauſe then they might reaſonably be preſumed to ariſe from a pitiable ignorance and diſſetlement of Conſcience: But as ſoon as the Abrogation of the *Moſaick* Inſtitution was fully declared and acknowledged in the Church, they were brought under the common yoke of Diſcipline, and were not permitted to plead their Doubts and Scruples againſt publick Laws and Conſtitutions. And this too is our preſent caſe, men labour to ſupport an old Schiſm by outworn ſcruples and jealouſies, and will perſevere in their doubts, becauſe they

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are reſolved never to be ſatisfied; for otherwiſe it were impoſſible, that after ſo much time, and ſo much ſatisfaction, they could ſtill remain unreſolved. And if whole Armies of Reaſon have not been ſufficient to chaſe away all their little and imaginary fears: Yet methinks ſo long time, and ſo much experience might be ſufficient to convince them, that they are but ſhadows, and illuſions of their own *melancholy Fancies*; for had they been real and ſubſtantial things, it is impoſſible they ſhould ever have eſcaped the diſcovery of ſo long and ſo ſevere a ſcrutiny. But, if nor time, nor reaſon can diſabuſe them, it is not their ignorance, but their obſtinacy that is invincible. Thus *v.g.* when to kneel at the *Communion*, is in it ſelf an handſom and decent action, in that this Sacrament is the moſt ſolemn piece of gratitude, or worſhip in the *Chriſtian Religion*, and a peculiar acknowledgment of our vaſt and unſpeakable obligations to our *Redeemer*; and therefore to be performed with the profoundeſt Reverence and Humility: And when theſe men themſelves are not only ready to obſerve, but alſo to enjoyn the ſame poſture in their ordinary

Prayers, and other leſs ſolemn expreſſions of Devotion; and when the power of the Church has actually determined and required this reverent poſture, to ſtamp a peculiar ſacredneſs and ſolemnity upon this Duty, no man can poſſibly now ſcruple its practice without affected contempt, and wilful diſobedience; becauſe they cannot but be convinced (unleſs they are reſolved againſt it) of the vanity and diſ-ingenuity of their old pretence: Namely, leſt they ſhould be interpreted to give religious Worſhip to the *Elements*, and by lying proſtrate before the *Bread* and *Wine*, they ſhould become guilty of *Idolatry*, in giving Divine Worſhip to a ſenſleſs piece of matter. For when they plead this excuſe for their diſobedience, they cannot but be conſcious to themſelves, that by it they do not only deſpiſe, but ſlander and reproach the Laws, that they out-face and traduce Authority, and would force their Governours to believe and confeſs that they favour what they expreſly abhor; ſeeing the very ſame Law that enjoyns this Ceremony, provides ſo expreſly againſt this abuſe, and declares ſo induſtriouſly, That it is ſo far from deſigning

ſigning any reverence to the *Creatures* themſelves, that it abhors it; but only requires it, as it is uſed in all other Religious addreſſes to Heaven. And, if notwithſtanding all this, men will dread it as a piece of *Idolatry*, becauſe (forſooth) it has been, or may be abuſed to that purpoſe, I ſay no more, than that if ſuch thin and frivolous ſcruples may outweigh the Laws, and evacuate our obligations to obedience, there are none in the World that are not as apparently liable to as diſ-ingenuous ſurmiſes; and they may as rationally forbear looking up towards Heaven in their prayers, leſt they ſhould worſhip the Clouds, or the Sun, Moon, and Stars. But the truth of it is, ſome men ſtudy for impertinent ſcruples, to enſnare themſelves, and labour to raiſe great doubts from little reaſons, and cannot be ſatisfied, becauſe they will not; they have enſlaved themſelves to their follies, and boared their ears to their ſcruples, and are reſolved to grow old in a voluntary bondage to trifles and fooleries. Now it is neceſſary for people of this humour to ſtreighten the Laws, till they have made them too ſevere and rigorous to be obeyed, to

draw their knot, till it becomes troubleſom and uneaſie; to put them upon the Wrack, and ſtretch them beyond, or beſide their own intention by rare and extraordinary caſes, by harſh and unkind Interpretations, and by far-fetch'd and diſingenuous ſuſpicions; and, under the ſhelter of ſuch *precarious pretences* as no Law can poſſibly avoid, they refuſe the *Liberty* that is given them to obey the Laws, only that they may take the *Licence* to diſobey them. In brief, the main Myſtery of all this niceneſs (though themſelves have not wit enough to obſerve its firſt cauſes) is, for the moſt part, nothing but a little pride and vain-glory: It is a glorious thing to ſuffer for a *tender Conſcience*, and therefore it is eaſie and natural for ſome people to affect ſome little ſcruples againſt the Commands of Authority, thereby to make themſelves obnoxious to ſome little Penalties; and then what *godly men* are they that are ſo ready to be puniſhed for a good Conſcience? How do ſuch men hug and nurſe their dear ſcruple? All the reaſon, and all the perſwaſion in the World ſhall never be able to wreſt it from them. It is their *Ephod* and their *Teraphim*, the only mark

mark of their Godlineſs, and ſymbol of their Religion; and if you rob them of that, you *take away their gods: And what have they more?*

Sect. 3. If my Conſcience be really weak and tender, What can become it more than humble obedience and ſubmiſſion to Authority? Weakneſs of Conſcience always proceeds in ſome meaſure from want of wit; and therefore to make this the pretence of diſobedience, is in effect to ſay, I will controul the wiſdom of my Superiours, becauſe I have little or none my ſelf. Certainly, where perſons have any ſerious ſenſe of their own ignorance, they can ſcarce have a ſtronger obligation to obedience: And they can never be ſo confident in any action, as when they obey; becauſe then they have the Publick Wiſdom to warrant them, and their own Folly to excuſe them: That is, they follow the beſt guide men are capable of, in their Circumſtances. And a Subject that is *Conſcious* of his own weakneſs, when he reſigns up himſelf to the Wiſdom of his Superiours, in matters doubtful and diſputable, is in effect governed by

the beſt and ſafeſt Dictates of his own Conſcience; which, unleſs it be hardned with pride and inſolence, cannot but perſwade him, that he ought to preſume them more competent Judges of the fitneſs and expediency of Publick Laws, whoſe work and office it is to underſtand them, than himſelf, who is wholly ignorant of the management and tranſaction of *Publick Affairs*. This is the moſt common Principle of humane life, and all men practiſe by it in all their concerns, but thoſe of Religion. And that is the reaſon it has ever been debauched with ſo many follies and frenzies, becauſe ſilly people will not ſubmit their Conſciences to any thing but their own *giddy Imaginations*: Whereas, if they would but condeſcend to the ſame Rules of Government in matters of Religion, as they do in all their other affairs, obedience to Authority might be ſecured without any violence to Conſcience; ſeeing no Conſcience, that is acted by wiſe and ſober perſwaſions, will ever be ſtiff in doubtful and uncertain Caſes, againſt the determinations of the Publick Wiſdom: Becauſe ſuch men being ſenſible how unable they are to govern

vern themſelves, they know they can never act more ſafely, than when they are governed by their Superiors: And being they cannot pretend to truſt confidently enough to their own conduct, how can they proceed upon wiſer and more reaſonable grounds, than by committing themſelves to the *Publick Wiſdom?* In which, though poſſibly they might be miſguided, yet they may ſecure themſelves, that, God who values integrity more than ſubtilty, will pardon their weakneſs, and reward their meekneſs and humility. But for a man to plead weakneſs of Conſcience for diſobedience to Government, is juſt as if a Child in *Minority* ſhould reject the advice of his *Guardians*, becauſe he has not wit enough to know, when he is well adviſed; or as if a *Fool* ſhould refuſe to be governed, becauſe he has not reaſon enough to diſcern when he is well managed; or as if a *Blind Man* ſhould not truſt to the conduct of a Guide, becauſe he is not able to judge when he is *miſled.*

Humility and Condeſcenſion are the moſt proper duties of weakneſs and ignorance, and meekneſs, and ſimplicity the only ornaments of a tender Conſcience;

ence: And one would think that men, whoſe confidence exceeds not their wit, ſhould be ſtrangely wary of cenſuring the wiſdom of Authority. And therefore it is but a very odd pretence to weakneſs of Conſcience, when it appears in nothing but being too ſtrong for Government; and that man that pretends to it, does not ſeriouſly believe himſelf, if he preſumes he is wiſe enough to govern his Governors: And ſo does every one, that thinks the perſwaſions of his own mind of ſufficient force to cancel the obligations of their commands. It is an handſom piece of modeſty for one, who pretends to weakneſs of Conſcience, when his Prince requires his obedience to give him counſel, to adviſe him how to govern the Kingdom, to blame and correct the Laws, and to tell him how this and the other might be mended. And, What can be more fulſom, than to ſee men, under pretences of great ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of Conſcience, to cheriſh ſtubbornneſs and vanity, and to endure neither Laws nor Superiours, becauſe they are proud enough to think themſelves more *Holy* than their Neighbours? What a malapert and inſolent piece of

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pride is it, for every *Prating Goſſip* and illiterate Mechanick (that can mark themſelves with ſome diſtinctive names and Characters of Godlineſs) to ſcoff and jibe at the wiſdom of publick Authority, to affront the Laws and Conſtitutions of a Church, to pity and diſdain the lamentable ignorance of *Learned Men*, and to Libel all ſorts of people that are not of their own *Rendez-vous* (eſpecially their Snperiors) with ſlanders and idle ſtories? What ſtrange effects are theſe of a diffident and timorous Conſcience? A Conſcience that knows it ſelf to be acted by certain and infallible Principles, how could it be more head-ſtrong and confident? And therefore, if we compare theſe mens practices with their pretences, What can be more evident, than that it is not *Tenderneſs* of Conſcience that emboldens them to fall out with all the World, but pride, and vanity, and inſolence? For nothing elſe could poſſibly drive them on with ſo peremptory a ſail, againſt ſo ſtrong and ſo united a torrent. For a Conſcience, that is only weak and tender, is of a yielding and pliable temper, it is ſoft and innocent, modeſt, and tenable, apt to comply

ply with the Commands of its Superiours, and eaſily capable of all impreſſions tending to Peace and Charity; but when it is ſtubborn and confident in its own apprehenſions, then it is not tender, but hardy and humourſom: And, as *queaſie* as it is in reference to its Superiours Commands, it is uſually ſtrong enough to digeſt Rebellion and Villany; and whilſt it riſes againſt a poor innocent Ceremony, it is ſcarce ever ſtirred with Schiſm, Faction, and Cruelty. Now to permit theſe men their liberty, who miſtake inſolence for tenderneſs of Conſcience, (than which nothing more eaſie, or more natural for people, that are both proud and ſimple) is to ſuffer ignorance to ride in *Triumph*, becauſe it is proud and confident; and to indulge zealous Idiots in their folly, becauſe they threaten Authority, to be peeviſh and ſcrupulous to their Laws, and to infeſt their Government with a *ſullen and croſs-grain'd Godlineſs* (an Artifice not much unlike the tricks of ſome froward Children) and therefore ſuch untoward and *humourſom Saints* muſt be laſhed out of their ſullenneſs (as Children are) into compliance and

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better manners; otherwiſe they will be an eternal annoyance to all Government, with the childiſh and whining pretences of a *weak and craſie Conſcience*. In brief, I appeal to all mankind (that have but any tolerable conception of the nature and deſign of Religion) Whether it be not much more becoming the temper of a *Chriſtian Spirit*, to comply with the commands of their Superiors, that are not apparently ſinful, in order to the Peace and Setlement of the Church, than to diſturb its quiet by a ſtubborn and peremptory adherence to our own Doubts and Scruples? For, What is there in *Chriſtianity* of greater importance, than the vertues of meekneſs, peaceableneſs, and humility? And in what can theſe great duties more diſcover themſelves, than in the offices and civilities of *humble Obedience*; that contains in it all that is moſt amiable, and moſt uſeful in the Chriſtian Religion? 'Tis modeſty, 'tis meekneſs, 'tis humility, 'tis love, 'tis peaceableneſs, 'tis ingenuity; 'Tis a duty ſo pregnant with Vertue in it ſelf, and of ſuch abſolute neceſſity to the happineſs of mankind, That there is ſcarce anything can come in com-

competition with it, whoſe obligation it will not at the firſt appearance utterly cancel and evacuate, (as I ſhall more fully demonſtrate in the enſuing Propoſitions.) In the mean while we ſee, what is to be done in the caſe of tender Conſciences: If they are acted by calm and peaceable Principles, they will not *deſire* liberty; if they are not, they will not *deſerve* it. For, if they are humble and modeſt, they will chuſe to ſubmit to the will of their Superiors, rather than, by thwarting them, do what in themſelves lies to diſcompoſe the publick Peace. And therefore if they will rather venture to embroil the Common-wealth, and contradict Authority, than forego their own *peremptory Determinations*, and make their Superiors comply and bend to their confidence; it is becauſe they are criminally bold and imperious in their own conceits, and are of a temper too ſtubborn, inſolent, and preſumptuous to be endured in any Society of men.

Sect. 4. Doubts and Scruples are ſo far from being ſufficient *Warranty* of diſobedience, that they are outweighed by the *Obligations* of the Law: For if I doubt

doubt concerning the injuſtice of my action, I muſt alſo of neceſſity doubt of the injuſtice of my diſobedience; and unleſs I am abſolutely certain that the Law is evil, I am ſure diſobedience to it is: And therefore I am always as forcibly bound to obey a ſcrupled Law, for fear of the ſin of diſobedience, as to diſobey it, for fear it commands an eſſential evil: So that a doubting Conſcience muſt always at leaſt as much fright us from diſobeying, as from obeying any *Humane Law*. Though indeed, if we would ſpeak properly, the commands of Authority perfectly determine, and evacuate all doubtfulneſs and irreſolution of Conſcience: For, if it before hung in ſuſpence concerning the lawfulneſs of the action, and unreſolved, Whether it were good or evil, as not having competent reaſon to incline to one ſide rather than to the other; yet when Authority caſts its commands into the Scale (if in ſome mens Conſciences they weigh any thing) they cannot but add weight more than enough to determine the Judgment, and incline the Balance. For if the Reaſons on both ſides were equal before, than thet ſide that gains this acceſſion

ceſſion has moſt reaſon now. So that Laws do not force us to obey them with a doubting Conſcience, but remove our doubts at the ſame time they require our obedience; becauſe they deſtroy the equal probability of the two opinions, and determine the Conſcience to a confidence of acting, by directing it to follow the ſafeſt and moſt probable perſwaſion: In that no practice or opinion, that is capable of doubt or uncertainty, can be of equal importance with the prime Duties of obedience and humility; and the matter of all doubts and ſcruples is ever of too ſmall and inconſiderable a conſequence to be laid in the *Balance* againſt the great and weighty miſchiefs of diſobedience. If indeed the commands of Authority enjoyned any thing abſolutely and apparently evil, and againſt the great and unalterable Rules of truth and goodneſs, in ſuch exigents *Da veniam Imperator* would be a fair and civil excuſe: But matters of a leſs importance will not pay the charges of a perſecution, it is not worth the while to ſuffer for little things; and that man has but the juſt reward of his own folly, that would ſuffer *Martyrdom* in the cauſe of

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an indifferent Ceremony, or for the truth of a *Metaphyſical Notion*. And the ſuggeſtion of *Optatus* to the *Donatiſts*, who were ſo forward to caſt away their lives in defence of their little Schiſm, was ſmart and ſevere. *Nulli dictum eſt, nega Deum; nulli dictum eſt, incende Teſtamentum; nulli dictum eſt, aut thus pone, aut Baſilicas dirue. Iſtæ enim res ſolent Martyria generare.* Lib. 3. Matters, wherein the Being of Religion, and the Truth of Chriſtianity, were directly concerned, were worth the dying for, and would quit the coſts of Martyrdom; but no indifferent Rites or Ceremonies were of value enough to pay for the lives of men: And the Zealots of the *Pars Donati*, who were ſo ambitious to ſuffer Impriſonment, Confiſcation of Goods, Baniſhment, and Death it ſelf, out of a pertinacious reſolution againſt ſome eſtabliſhed cuſtoms and uſages of the Church, could never be rewarded in any other Heaven, but the *Paradiſe* of Fools. Things that are eſſentially evil, no change or variety of Circumſtances can make good; and therefore no commands of any Superior can ever warrant or legitimate their practice: But then

theſe are always matters of the greateſt and moſt weighty importance, and of an apparent and palpable obliquity, ſuch as Blaſphemy, Murther, Injuſtice, Cruelty, Ingratitude, *&c.* that are ſo clearly and intrinſically evil, that no end, how good or great ſoever, can ever carry with it goodneſs enough to abate or evacuate their *Malice*. But as for all matters, that are not ſo apparently good or evil, but are capable of doubt and uncertainty, their Morality is of ſo ſmall importance, that it can never ſtand in competition with the obligations and conveniences of the great Duty of obedience. And thus when the Apoſtles were forbidden by the Jewiſh *Sanhedrim* to Preach the Name of *Jeſus*, *Acts* 5. 29. they deſired to be excuſed, upon no other account but of an expreſs command from God himſelf, in a matter of great importance, and apparent neceſſity. Our *Bleſſed Saviour* coming into the World with a Commiſſion from its Supream Governour to make Laws, and the *Holy Apoſtles* having an infallible aſſurance of his Divine Authority from his great, manifeſt, and undeniable Miracles (the moſt certain and unqueſtionable credentials that Hea-

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ven can ſend to the Sons of Men) they could not but lie under an indiſpenſable obligation to give aſſent to his Meſſage, and obedience to his Commands; and that out of duty to the *Supream Governour* of the Univerſe; from whoſe unqueſtionable Laws, no other Authority can ever derogate, becauſe it is all of an inferiour nature. But to apply this Rule, which the *Apoſtles* never made uſe of, but in a caſe of certain, abſolute, and notorious injuſtice, to matters of a ſmall, doubtful, and uncertain nature, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the quiet of Government, and infinitely diſtant from the intention of the Apoſtles. Their Plea was in a caſe of great, evident, and unqueſtionable neceſſity: But what warrant is that for my diſobedience, when I only fear, or fancy the Law to be unjuſt? Which, if it were ſo, is not of moment enough to weigh againſt the miſchiefs and enormities, that follow upon diſobedience: And therefore in all doubtful and leſs conſiderable caſes, that ſide, on which obedience ſtands, muſt ever carry it; and no man that is either wiſe or good, will ever trouble his Governours, with nice and curious diſputes; the Au-

thority of the Law ſtifles all ſcruples, and trifling objections. And thus where there was no apparent repugnancy to the Law of God, we find none more compliant and conformable in all other things than the Apoſtles, freely uſing any Cuſtoms of the *Synagogue* or *Jewiſh Church*, that were not expreſly cancelled by ſome Divine Prohibition.

But further, this their Apology is as forcible a Plea in concerns of Civil Juſtice and common honeſty, as in Matters of Religion; it holds equally in both, in caſes of a certain and eſſential injuſtice, and fails equally in both, in doubtful and leſs material caſes; and was as fairly urged by that famous Lawyer *Papinian*, who upon this account, when the *Emperor* commanded him to defend and juſtifie the lawfulneſs of *Parricide*, choſe rather to die, than to Patronize ſo monſtrous a villany: Here the wickedneſs was great and palpable. But in matters more doubtful and leſs material, where the caſe is nice and curious, and not capable of any great Intereſt, or great reaſon, there Obedience outweighs and evacuates all Doubts, Jealouſies, and ſuſpicions: And what wiſe

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or honeſt man will offend, or provoke his Superiours upon thin pretences, and for little regards? And if every man, that can raiſe doubts and ſcruples, and nice Exceptions againſt a Law, ſhall therefore ſet himſelf free from its obligation; then farewel all Peace, and all Government. For what more eaſie to any man, that underſtands the Fundamental Grounds and Reaſons of *Moral Equity*, than to pick more material quarrels againſt the Civil Laws of any Common-wealth, than our Adverſaries can pretend to againſt our *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions*? And now, ſhall a Philoſopher be excuſed from obedience to the Laws of his Country, becauſe he thinks himſelf able to make exceptions to their Prudence and Convenience, and to prove them not ſo uſeful to the Publick, nor ſo agreeable to the Fundamental Rules of natural Juſtice and Equity, as himſelf could have contrived? What if I am really perſwaded, that I can raiſe much more conſiderable objections againſt *Littletons Tenures*, than ever theſe men have, or ſhall be able to produce againſt our Ceremonial Conſtitutions? Though it be eaſie to be miſtaken in my conceit, yet

whether I am, or am not, it is all one, if I am confident. And now it would be mightily conducive to the interests of Justice and Publick Peace for me, and all others of my *Fond Perswasion* in this particular, to make Remonstrances to the Laws of the Land, to Petition the King and Parliament; to leave us, at the liberty of our own Conscience and Discretion, to follow the *best Light*, God has given us, for the setlement of our own estates; because we think we can do it more exactly according to the Laws of *Natural Justice*, than if we are tied up to the positive Laws of the Land. Thus that groundless and arbitrary maxim of the Law, *That inheritances may lineally descend, but not lineally ascend*, whereby the Father is made uncapable of being immediate Heir to the Son, would be thought by a *Philosopher* prejudicial to one of the most equal and most ingenuous Laws of Nature, *viz. The gratitude of Children to Parents*; which this Law seems in a great measure to hinder, by alienating those things from them, whereby we are best able to express it. What if I have been happy in a loving and tender Father, that has been strangely soli-

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citous to leave me furniſhed with all the comforts and conveniences of life, that declined not to forego any ſhare of his own eaſe and happineſs to procure mine, that has ſpent the greateſt part of his care and induſtry to bleſs me, according to the proportion of his abilities, with a good fortune, and a good education; and has, perhaps out of an over-tender ſolicitude for my welfare, reduc'd himſelf to great ſtreights and exigences: How monſtrous & unnatural muſt the contrivance of this Law appear to me, that, when the bounty of Providence has bleſt me with a fortune anſwerable to the *good old Mans* deſires and endeavours, if I ſhould happen to be cut off before him by an *untimely death*, all that, whereby I am able to recompence his *Fatherly tenderneſs*, ſhould in the common and ordinary courſe of Law be conveyed from him to another perſon; the ſtream of whoſe affections was confined to another Channel, and who, being much concerned for his own Family, could in all probability be but little concerned for me? What an unnatural and unjuſt Law is this that deſigns, as far as it can, to cut off the ſtreams of our natural Af-

ſections, and diſpoſes of our poſſeſſions contrary to the very firſt tendencies, and obligations of Nature? So eaſie a thing is it to talk *little Plauſibilities* againſt any Laws, whoſe obligation is poſitive, and not of a prime and abſolute neceſſity: And yet down-right Rebellion it would be, if I, or any man elſe, ſhould refuſe ſubjection to theſe and the like Laws, upon theſe, & the like pretences. And thus, we ſee, is the caſe all the way equal between Laws Civil, and Laws Eccleſiaſtical. In all matters greatly and notoriouſly wicked, the nature of the action out-weighs the duty of Obedience; but in all caſes leſs certain and leſs material, the duty of Obedience out-weighs the nature of the action. And this may ſuffice to ſhew, from the *Subject Matters* of all doubts and ſcruples, That they are not of conſideration great enough to be oppoſed to the commands of Authority. And this leads me from the matter of a ſcrupulous Conſcience, to conſider its Authority: And therefore,

Sect. 5. As the objects of a ſcrupulous Conſcience are of too mean importance, to weigh againſt the miſchiefs of Diſobedience;

dience; ſo are its obligations too weak, to prevail againſt the commands of Publick Authority. For when two contradictory obligations happen to encounter, the greater ever cancels the leſs; becauſe if all good be eligible, then ſo are all the degrees of goodneſs too: And therefore to that ſide on which the greater good ſtands, our duty muſt ever incline; otherwiſe we deſpiſe all thoſe degrees of goodneſs, it contains in it above the other. For in all the Rules of Goodneſs there is great inequality and variety of degrees, ſome are preſcribed for their own native excellency & uſefulneſs, and others purely for their ſubſerviency to theſe: Now when a greater & a leſſer virtue happen to claſh, as it frequently falls out in the tranſaction of Humane Affairs, there the leſs always gives place to the greater, becauſe it is good only in order to it; and therefore where its ſubordination ceaſes, there its goodneſs ceaſes, and by conſequence its obligation. For no ſubordinate or inſtrumental dutys are abſolutly commanded or commended, but become good or evil by their *Accidental Relations*; their goodneſs is not intrinſick, but depends upon the goodneſs of their end,

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and their being directed to a good end, (if they are not intrinsically evil) makes them virtuous; because their Morality is entirely relative and changeable, and so alters its colours of good and evil, by its several aspects and postures to various and different ends: And therefore they never carry any *Obligation* in them, when they interfere with higher & more useful Duties. And hence it comes to pass, that it is absolutely impossible for any man to be reduced into a necessity of sinning; because, though two inferiour and subordinate Duties may sometimes happen to be inconsistent with each other or with some duty of an absolute and unalterable goodness; yet the nature of things is so handsomly contrived, that it is utterly impossible that things should ever happen so crosly, as to make two essential and indispensable Duties stand at mutual opposition: And therefore no man can ever be forc'd to act against one, out of compliance with the other: And if there be any contrariety between a natural and instrumental Duty, there the case is plain, that the greater evacuates the less; if between two instrumental Duties, it can scarce so fall out, but that

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ſome emergent circumſtances ſhall make one of them the more neceſſary; but if they are both equally eligible, there is no difficulty; and a man may do as he pleaſes. It is indeed poſſible for any man, by his own voluntary choice to entangle himſelf in this ſad perplexity; but there is no culpable Error that is unavoidable, and every ſinfully erroneous Conſcience is voluntary and vincible: And if men will not part with their ſinful Errors, it is not becauſe they cannot, but becauſe they will not avoid them. And if they reſolve to abuſe themſelves, no wonder, if their ſin be unavoidable; but then the neceſſity is the effect of their own choice: And ſo all ſin is inevitable, when the peremptory determination of the will, has made it neceſſary. But as for the nature of all the Laws of Goodneſs in themſelves, they are ſo wiſely contrived, that it is abſolutely impoſſible any circumſtances ſhould ever fall out ſo awkardly, as to make one ſin the only way to eſcape another, or a neceſſary paſſage to a neceſſary Duty. Now to apply this general Rule of Conſcience to our particular caſe, there is not any Precept in the Goſpel ſet down in more poſitive and unlimited

limited expreſſions, or urged with more vehement motives and perſwaſions, than obedience to Government; becauſe there are but few, if any, Duties of a weightier and more important neceſſity than this: And for this reaſon is it, that God has injoined it with ſuch an abſolute and unreſtrained ſeverity, thereby to intimate that nothing can reſtrain the univerſality of its obligatory power, but evident & unqueſtionable diſobedience to himſelf. The duty of Obedience is the original and Fundamental Law of *Humane Societies*, and the only advantage that diſtinguiſhes Government from Anarchy. This takes away all diſſentions, by reducing every mans private will and judgment to the determination of *Publick Authority*: Whereas, without it, every ſingle perſon is his own Governour, and no man elſe has any power or command over his actions, *i. e.* He is out of the ſtate of Government, and Society. And for this reaſon is obedience, and condeſcenſion to the wiſdom of Publick Authority, one of the moſt abſolute and indiſpenſable duties of mankind, as being ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to the peace and preſervation of Humane Societies.

Societies. Now a Conſcience, that will not ſtand to the Decrees and Determinations of its Governors, ſubverts the very Foundations of all Civil Society, that ſubſiſts upon no other principle, but mens ſubmitting their own judgments to the deciſions of Authority, in order to the publick peace and ſetlement; without which there muſt of neceſſity be eternal diſorders and confuſions. And therefore, where the Dictates of a private Conſcience happen to thwart the determinations of the publick Laws, they, in that caſe, loſe their binding power; becauſe, if in that caſe they ſhould oblige, it would unavoidably involve all Societies in perpetual tumults and diſorders. Whereas the main end of all Divine, as well as Humane Laws, is the proſperity and preſervation of Humane Society: So that where any thing tends to the diſſolution of Government, and undermining of Humane happineſs, though in other circumſtances it were virtuous, yet in this it becomes criminal, as deſtroying a thing of greater goodneſs than it ſelf. And hence, though a doubtful and ſcrupulous Conſcience ſhould oblige in all other caſes, yet, when its commands

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run counter to the commands of Authority, there its obligatory power immediately ceaſes; becauſe to act againſt it, is uſeful to vaſtly more noble and excellent purpoſes, than to comply with it: In that every man that thwarts and diſobeys the Laws of the Common-wealth, does his part to diſturb its Publick Peace, that is maintained by nothing elſe but obedience and ſubmiſſion to its Laws. Now this is manifeſtly a bigger miſchief and inconvenience, than the foregoing of any doubts and ſcruples can amount to: And therefore, unleſs Authority impoſe upon me ſomething that carries with it more evil and miſchief, than there is convenience in the peace and happineſs of the whole Society, I am indiſpenſably bound to yield obedience to his commands: And though I ſcrupulouſly fear leſt the Magiſtrates injunctions ſhould be ſuperſtitious, yet, becauſe I am not ſure they are ſo, and becauſe a little irregularity in the external expreſſions of *Divine Worſhip* carries with it leſs miſchief and enormity, than the diſturbance of the Peace of Kingdoms, I am abſolutely obliged to lay aſide my doubt, rather than diſobey the Law; becauſe to preſerve

preſerve it, naturally tends to vaſt miſchiefs and confuſion; whereas the inconvenience of my acting againſt it, is but doubtful; and though it were certain, yet it is ſmall and comparatively inconſiderable. And therefore to act againſt the inclinations of our own doubts and ſcruples, is ſo far from being criminal, that it is an eminent inſtance of Virtue, and implies in it, beſides its ſubſerviency to the welfare of mankind, the great duties of Modeſty, Peaceableneſs, and Humility. And as for, what ſome are forward enough to object, that this is, *To do evil, that good may come of it*; it is a vain and frivolous exception, and prevented in what I have already diſcourſed; in that that Rule is concerned only in things abſolutely and eſſentially evil, whoſe nature no caſe can alter, no circumſtance can extenuate, and no end can ſanctifie: But things that are only ſubſerviently good or evil, derive all their Virtue from the greater Virtue they wait upon; and therefore where a meaner, or an inſtrumental duty ſtands in competition with an eſſential Virtue, its contrariety deſtroys its goodneſs; and inſtead of being leſs virtuous, becomes altogether ſinful;

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for though it have abſtractedly ſome degrees of goodneſs, yet when it chances to oppoſe any duty, that has more, and more excellent degrees, it becomes evil and unreaſonable, by as many degrees as that excels it. And one would think this caſe ſhould be paſt diſpute, as to the matters of our preſent Controverſie, that are of ſo vaſt a diſtance and diſproportion; foraſmuch as obedience is a virtue of ſo abſolute neceſſity, and ſo diffuſive uſefulneſs; whereas the goodneſs of thoſe little things, they oppoſe to it, is ſo ſmall, that it is confeſſedly ſcarce diſcernable; and their Conſciences, as nice and curious as they are, are not able to determine poſitively, whether they are good or evil: And therefore, what a prodigious madneſs is it, to weigh ſuch trifling and contemptible things againſt the vaſt miſchiefs and inconveniences of diſobedience? The voice of the publick Laws cannot but drown the uncertain whiſpers of a *tender Conſcience*; all its ſcruples are huſhed and ſilenced by the commands of Authority: It dares not whimper, when that forbids; and the nod of a Prince aws it into ſilence and ſubmiſſion. But if they dare to murmur,

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and their proud ſtomachs will ſwell againſt the rebukes of their Superiors, then there is no remedy but the rod and correction: They muſt be chaſtiſed out of their peeviſhneſs, and laſhed into obedience. In a word, though Religion ſo highly conſults the intereſts of Commonwealths, and is the greateſt inſtrument of the peace & happineſs of Kingdoms; yet ſo monſtrouſly has it been abuſed by the folly of ſome, and wickedneſs of others, that nothing in the world has been the mother of more miſchief to Government. The main cauſe of which has been mens not obſerving the due ſcale and ſubordination of duties, and that, in caſe of competition, the greater always deſtroys the leſs: For hence have they oppoſed the Laws, and by conſequence the peace of the Society, for an Opinion, or a Ceremony, or a ſubordinate inſtrumental duty; whereas, had they ſoberly conſidered the important neceſſity of their obedience, they would ſcarce have found any duty of moment enough to weigh againſt it. For ſeeing almoſt all virtues are injoined us in order to the felicity of man, and ſeeing there is nothing more conducive to it, than that which tends to the Publick

weal and good of all; and ſeeing this is the deſign, and natural tendency of the Publick Laws, and our obedience to them; that had need be hugely, certainly, and abſolutely evil, that cancels their obligation, and diſpences with our obedience; and not a Form, or a Ceremony, or an outward expreſſion, or any other inſtrumental part of Religion. But ſome men think it better to be diſputative than peaceable; and that there is more godlineſs in being captious and talkative, than in being humble and obedient: It is a pleaſure to them to be troubleſome to Authority, they beat about, and ſearch into every little corner, for doubts & exceptions againſt their commands: And how do they *triumph*, when they can but ſtart a ſcruple? They labour to ſtumble at Atoms, to boggle at ſtraws and ſhadows; and cheriſh their ſcruples till they become as big as they are unreaſonable, and lay ſo much ſtreſs upon them, as to make them out-weigh the greateſt and moſt weighty things of the Law. And it is prodigiouſly ſtrange (and yet as common too) to conſider how moſt men, who pretend (and that perhaps ſincerely) to great tenderneſs of

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Conſcience, and ſcruple poſtures and innocent ceremonies, are ſo hardy as to digeſt the moſt wicked and moſt miſchievous villanies: They can diſpence with ſpightfulneſs, malice, diſobedience, ſchiſm, and diſturbance of the Publick Peace, and all, to nouriſh a weak and an impotent ſcruple; and in purſuit of any little conceit, they will run themſelves into the greateſt and moſt palpable enormities; and will cheriſh it, till it weighs down the peace of Kingdoms, and Fundamental Principles of common honeſty. Find me a man that is obſtinately ſcrupulous, and I will ſhew you one that is incurably ſeditious; and whoever will prefer his ſcruples before the great duties of obedience, peace, quietneſs, and humility, cannot avoid being often betrayed into tumults and ſeditions. But if we will reſolve to be *tender* of our obedience to the great, undoubted, and unalterable commands of the Goſpel; that will defend our Conſciences againſt the vexation of ſcruples, and little inadvertencies, protect the publick from all the diſturbances of a peeviſh and wayward godlineſs, and ſecure our acceptance

with God, without being ſo punctual and exact in the Offerings of Mint and Cummin.

Sect. 6. In caſes and diſputes of a publick concern, private men are not properly *ſui Juris*, they have no power over their own actions, they are not to be directed by their own judgments, or determined by their own wills; but by the commands and determinations of the Publick Conſcience. And if there be any ſin in the command, he that impoſed it, ſhall anſwer for it; and not I, whoſe whole Duty it is to obey: The commands of Authority will warrant my obedience, my obedience will hallow, or at leaſt excuſe my action, and ſo ſecure me from ſin, if not from error; becauſe I follow the beſt guide, and moſt probable direction I am capable of: And though I may miſtake, my integrity ſhall preſerve my innocence. And in all doubtful and diſputable caſes it is better to err e with *Authority*, than be in the right againſt it; not only, becauſe the danger of a little error (and ſo it is, if it be diſputable) is out-weighed by the importance of the great duty of obedience, that is more ſervice-

ſerviceable to the main ends of Religion, than a more nice and exact way of acting in oppoſition to Government; but alſo, becauſe they are to be ſuppoſed the fitteſt Judges of what tends to the Publick Good, whoſe buſineſs it is to underſtand Publick Affairs: And therefore in all ſuch matters, their commands are the ſupream Rule of Conſcience, as being more competent Judges of Publick Concerns, than mens own private perſwaſions; and ſo muſt have a Superior Authority over them, and bind them to yield and ſubmit to their determinations. And, if we take away this *Condeſcenſion* of our Private Conſciences to Publick Authority, we immediately diſſolve all Government; for in caſe of diſſention, unleſs we ſubmit our perſwaſions to their commands, their commands muſt ſubmit to our perſwaſions. And then, let any man tell me, Wherein conſiſts the power of Princes, when it may be controlled by every Subjects opinion? and what can follow, but perfect diſorder and confuſion, when every man will be governed by nothing but his own conceits? And if Subjects may be allowed to diſpute the prudence and convenience of

all Laws, Government would be but a weak and helpleſs thing, and Princes would command at the will and pleaſure of their Subjects. And, therefore people are never curious in their exceptions againſt any Publick Laws, unleſs in matters of Religion; and, in that caſe they ſtudy for Reaſons to diſobey, becauſe it gratifies their pride & vanity, to ſeem more knowing than their Governours in that part of wiſdom, that they think moſt valuable. Self-conceit and Spiritual Pride are ſtrange Temptations to Diſobedience; and, were there not ſomething of this in it, men would find out other commands more liable to their exceptions. For how ſeldom is it, that any Wars are commenced upon juſt and warrantable grounds? And yet, how few are they, that take upon them to judge their lawfulneſs? All men here think their Princes command a ſufficient warrant to ſerve him, and ſatisfie themſelves in this, that, in caſe the cauſe prove to be unjuſt, the fault lies entirely upon him that commands, and not at all on him who has nothing to do but obey. And if it were otherwiſe, that no Subject were bound to take up Arms till himſelf

himſelf had approved the juſtneſs of the cauſe, Commonwealths muſt be bravely ſecured, and their ſafety muſt lie at the mercy of every humorſome and pragmatical Fellow. And yet to this piece of arrogance do men tempt themſelves, when they affect to be thought more godly than their Neighbors. It is a gallant thing to underſtand Religion better than their Superiors, and to pity their ignorance in the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, and by ſeeming to compaſſionate their weakneſs, to deſpiſe their Authority. But if Princes will ſuffer themſelves to be controul'd by the pride and inſolence of theſe contentious Zealots, they do but tempt them to ſlight both their perſons, and their Government; and if they will endure to be checked in their Laws Spiritual, and Government of the Church, by every *Syſtematical Theologue*, (and moſt, not to ſay the beſt, of our Adverſaries are little better) they may as well bear, to ſee themſelves affronted in their Laws Civil, and Government of the State by every *Village-Attorney*, and *Solicitor*.

Well then, all men that are in a ſtate of Government are bound, in all matters

doubtful and disputable, to submit the dictates of Private Conscience to the determinations of Publick Authority. Nor does this oblige any man to act against the dictates of his own Conscience, but only, by altering the case, alters his perswasions, *i.e.* though every man, considered absolutely, and by himself, be bound to follow his own private judgment; yet when he is considered as the member of a Society, then must be govern'd, then he must of necessity be bound to submit his own private thoughts to publick determinations. And it is the dictate of every mans Conscience, that is not turbulent and seditious, that it ought in all things that are not of a great & apparent necessity, whatever its own private judgment of them is, to acquiesce in the determinations of its Governors, in order to publick peace and unity. For unless this be done, there can be nothing but eternal disorders and confusions in the Church; in that it is utterly impossible that all men should have the same apprehensions of things, and (considering the tempers and passions of mankind) as impossible, that they should not pursue their differences and controversies with

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too much heat & vehemence: And therefore unleſs whatever their own judgments and apprehenſions be, they are bound in all ſuch caſes to acquieſce in the deciſions and determinations of the Governors of the Church, or Commonwealth, in order to its peace and ſetlement, there can be no poſſible way of avoiding endleſs ſquabbles and confuſions. And unleſs this be a fundamental Rule & dictate of every mans Conſcience, that as he is bound in all doubtful caſes to follow the βέλτιστον φαινόμενον, or the beſt *reſult* of his own private perſwaſions, where he neither has, nor is obliged to have, any other guide or rule of his actions; ſo he is bound to forego them all (provided his plain and neceſſary duty be ſecured) out of obedience to Authority, and in order to the due Government of the Society; there never can be any peace or ſetlement in any Church or Commonwealth in the world. And every Conſcience that is not thus perſwaded, is upon that account to be reckoned as ſeditious and unpeaceable, and ſo to be treated accordingly.

Sect. 7. He that with an implicite Faith and

and confidence, reſigns up his own Reaſon to any Superior on earth in all things, is a *Fool*; and he is as great a Fool, (to ſay no worſe) that will do it in nothing: For as all men are immediately ſubject to God alone, in matters of indiſpenſable duty, (that are not at all concern'd in our preſent diſpute) ſo are they, in all other things, to condeſcend to the Decrees and determinations of their lawful Superiors. Neither is this, to put men upon that ſupream Folly of renouncing the uſe and guidance of their own Reaſons out of obedience to any mans infallibility. For by *Reaſon* we mean nothing but, the mind of man making uſe of the wiſeſt and moſt prudential methods, to guid it ſelf in all its actions; and therefore it is not confined to any ſort of Maxims and Principles in Philoſophy, but it extends it ſelf to any knowledge that may be gained by Prudence, Experience, and Obſervation. And hence right Reaſon, when it is imploy'd about the actions of men, is nothing elſe but Prudence and Diſcretion: Now the Reaſon of any wiſe and ſober man will tell him, that it is moſt Prudent, Diſcreet, and Reaſonable, to forego his own private perſwaſions

ſions in things doubtful and diſputable, out of obedience to his lawful Superiours; becauſe, without this the World can never be governed. And ſuppoſing mens judgments and underſtandings to be never ſo much above the *Juriſdiction* of all Humane Authority, and that no man can be bound to ſubmit his Reaſon to any thing but the Commands of God; yet every man ows at leaſt ſo much civility to the will of his Prince, and the peace of his Country, as to bring himſelf to a compliance and ſubmiſſion to the Publick Judgment, rather than to diſturb the Publick Peace, for the gratification of his own Fancy and Opinion. Which is no enſlaving of his Reaſon to any mans uſurpation over his Faith and Conſcience, but only a bringing it to a modeſt compliance, in order to the common intereſts of Humane Society: And if it be not a duty of ſubjection, yet it is one of peaceableneſs; and if it be not grounded upon our obligations to the Authority it ſelf, yet it is moſt clearly derived from an higher Obligation, that all men are under, to advance the welfare of mankind, and more particularly of that Society they live in, that is antece-

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dent to those of Government, which is instituted only in order to the common good: And therefore, though our duty in such cases could not be deduced from our obligation to any humane Authority, yet it clearly arises from that duty of Charity we owe to our *Fellow Creatures*. And though we are not to submit our *Understandings* to any Humane Power, yet we are to the first and Fundamental Laws of Charity: which being one of the greatest duties of mankind, it is but reasonable to forego all more private and inferior obligations, when they stand in competition with it. And thus St. *Paul*, notwithstanding he declaimed with so much vehemence against the observation of the Judaical Rites and Ceremonies, never scrupled to use them, as oft as it was serviceable to the advancement of the Christian Religion, and by consequence the good of mankind. And all I would perswade men to, is only that they would do as much out of duty, as St. *Paul* did out of civility; that as he complied with the apprehensions of the Jews, retaining his own private judgment to himself, for the greater advantage of Religion; so they

they would, whatever their own perſwaſions are of ſome things not clearly and abſolutely ſinful, comply with the determinations of their Governours, when it is conducive to the nobler ends of Publick Peace and Tranquillity: A thing in it ſelf ſo good and ſo neceſſary, that there are very few actions, that it will not render virtuous, whatever they are in themſelves, whenever they happen to be uſeful and inſtrumental to its attainment. And therefore in all matters (that are no indiſpenſable duties of Religion) he, that acts croſs to the commands of Authority, has no ſenſe either of the great ends of Order and Government, or great duties of Humanity, Modeſt, Peaceableneſs, Meekneſs, and Civility, *i. e.* He is a proud and factious perſon; and has no other motive ſo to do, but the pleaſure of being peeviſh and diſobedient.

In fine, there is a vaſt difference between *Liberty*, and *Authority* of Conſcience; the former conſiſts in the Freedom of a mans own judgment, and of this no Magiſtrate can deprive us, in that he cannot tie up any mans underſtanding from judging of things as himſelf pleaſeth: But as for the latter, that conſiſts in the power

power over mens outward actions, and this, as far as it concerns all publick affairs, every man does, and of neceſſity muſt paſs away to the Rulers of that Society he lives in: Becauſe (though I have ſaid it often enough already, yet too often I cannot ſay it, in that it is the main Key of the Controverſie, and yet but little, if at all regarded by our Adverſaries) the very nature of Government conſiſts in nothing elſe but a power of command over mens actions; and therefore unleſs all men grant it away to their Governours, they live not under Government, but in a ſtate of *Anarchy*: Every man will be Prince and Monarch to himſelf, and as free from all commands, as if he lived out of all Society; ſeeing only himſelf ſhall have any real Dominion over his own actions, and his Governours ſhall not have power to command him any thing, but what himſelf firſt thinks fit to do: And I hope I need not to prove, that this is a plain diſſolution of all Government. So that when men will be the abſolute Maſters of their own actions, it is not the freedom of Conſcience, but its power and ſovereignty, for which they contend; they will endure none to rule

over

over them but themſelves, and force Princes to ſubmit their Laws to their ſaucy and imperious humour: And it is this they mean by their pretence to a tender Conſcience, *i. e.* A Conſcience that ſcruples to be ſubject to Government, that will in ſpight of all Publick Laws be entirely at its own Liberty, that will not ſubmit it ſelf to any Rule but its own private perſwaſions, that affects to be nice and ſqueamiſh againſt all the commands of its Superiours, and loves to cenſure them upon the lighteſt and moſt ſlender preſumptions, and that will not yield up any thing of its own phantaſtick humour to its Princes will, or the Churches Peace, *i. e.* in effect, the tenderneſs of their Conſciences (for which, forſooth, they muſt be born with) conſiſts in nothing elſe but their being the greateſt and moſt *Notorious Hereticks*. For the rankeſt ſort of Hereſie is nothing but the product of a peeviſh and contentious Spirit; and an Heretick is one that delights in Quarrels and Factions; whence *Eraſmus* renders S. *Pauls* αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον *Sectarum Author*, a man that loves to be the Leader of a Party: It is peeviſhneſs and obſtinacy of will that turns ſmall Errors

Errors into great Hereſies. Pride and Paſſion, and whatſoever can make an opinion vicious, are its Fundamental Ingredients, and give it its eſſential Formality. This vice lies not ſo much in the Opinions, as in the tempers of men, it is a ſtubborn and refractory diſpoſition of mind, or a peremptorineſs in a mans own conceptions; and therefore it is by Saint *Paul* reckon'd among the Fruits of the Fleſh, as being a kind of brutiſh peeviſhneſs, that is directly oppoſed to that lenity and yieldingneſs of mind, that is one of the choiceſt Fruits of the Spirit; whence he adviſes not to confute, but to admoniſh ſuch an one, *i. e.* That is quarrelſome and boiſterous for every trifle, and every fancy, becauſe through Pride and Perverſneſs he is uncapable of inſtruction; and therefore can only be adviſed, and not diſputed into Sobriety. Or (to uſe the phraſe of Saint *Paul*) he is φιλόνεικος, a fellow that is troubleſome and contentious, eſpecially about the external Rites and Uſages of the Church. And ſuch a malapert *Non-Conformiſt* he ſuppoſes diſputing in the Church of *Corinth*, that their Women ought, contrary to their received Cuſtom, to be uncovered

covered at *Divine Service*: But he takes him up with this ſhort and peremptory anſwer, *If any man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the Churches of God, i. e.* In things neither morally good nor evil (as few external Rites are) the practice of the Church is the warrant of their lawfulneſs, and reaſon of their decency; and that is ſatisfaction enough to any ſober and peaceable mind: And he that ſhall refractorily perſiſt to controul it, muſt be treated as a diſturber of the Peace, *i. e.* pitied and puniſhed, as are all other turbulent and ſeditious Perſons. When mens Conſciences are ſo ſqueamiſh or ſo humorſome, as that they will riſe againſt the Cuſtoms and Injunctions of the Church they live in, ſhe muſt ſcourge them into order, and chaſtiſe them, not ſo much for their fond perſwaſion, as for their troubleſome peeviſhneſs. And this uſe of the *Churches Rods* and *Cenſures*, is ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that it is the only effectual way to preſerve her from Factions and Contentions; not only becauſe upon this ſort of men ſofter methods can make no impreſſions, but alſo becauſe, if we remove the limits and boundaries of Diſcipline, there will be

no end of the follies and frenzies of brainſick People: And when they are once let looſe, who then can ſet bounds to the wildneſſes of *Godly Madneſs*? For this we have too clear a proof in the frantick practices of our Modern Sectaries, who, when they had inflamed their little Zeal againſt the Ceremonial Conſtitutions of our Church, ran themſelves into all manner of wild and extravagant geſtures: They meaſured the *ſimplicity* of Chriſts Worſhip by its oppoſition to all the Rules of *Decency*; all Inſtitutions of Order were unwarrantable Inventions and Traditions of Men; all Cuſtom was *Superſtition*, and all Diſcipline was *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*. Novelty, how uncouth and fantaſtick ſoever, was their only Rule of Decency; and every Sect diſtinguiſhed it ſelf from all others, by ſome affected and new-fangled ſingularity.

And from hence it is, that it is ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that Governors injoin matters of no great moment, and conſequence in themſelves, thereby to avoid the evils that would naturally attend upon their being not injoined; ſo that, when they are determined, though perhaps they

they are not of any great uſe to the Commonwealth in themſelves, yet they have at leaſt this conſiderable uſefulneſs, as to prevent many great miſchiefs, that would probably follow from their being not determined: And therefore the goodneſs of all ſuch Laws is to be valued, not ſo much by the nature of the things that the Law commands, as by the miſchiefs and evil effects, that it prevents or redreſſes. And thus the main decency of Order and Uniformity in Divine Worſhip lies not ſo properly in the poſitive uſe of the Rites themſelves, as in the prevention of all the indecencies of Confuſion; which could never be avoided, if there were not ſome peculiar Rites poſitively determined. So that the Law we ſee may be abſolutely neceſſary, when the thing it commands is but meerly indifferent; becauſe ſome things neceſſary cannot be obtained, but by ſome things indifferent: As in our preſent caſe, there is an abſolute neceſſity there ſhould be Order and Decency in Publick Worſhip, but Order and Decency there cannot be without the determination of ſome indifferent & partic ular Circumſtances; becauſe, if every man were left to his own fancy and

humor, there could be no remedy againſt eternal Follies and Confuſions: So that it is in general neceſſary that ſome circumſtances be determined, though perhaps no one particular circumſtance can be neceſſary; yet when any one is ſingled out by Authority, it gains as abſolute a neceſſity, as if it were ſo antecedently; becauſe though the thing it ſelf be indifferent, yet the Order and Decency of Publick Worſhip is not: Which yet can never be provided for, but by determining either this or ſome other Ceremony as perfectly indifferent and arbitrary. And now upon the reſult of theſe particulars, I leave it firſt to Publick Authority to conſider, whether it be not a wonderfully wiſe piece of good nature, to be tender & indulgent to theſe *poor tender Conſciences?* And then, I leave it to all the World to judge, Whether ever any Church or Nation in the World has been ſo wofully diſturbed upon ſuch ſlender and frivolous pretences as ours?

And thus have I at length finiſhed what I deſigned and undertook, *i. e.* I have proved the abſolute neceſſity of governing mens Conſciences and Perſwaſions in Matters of Religion, & the unavoidable

dangers

dangers of tolerating, or keeping up Religious Differences; have ſhewn, that there is not the leaſt poſſibility of ſetling a Nation, but by Uniformity in Religious Worſhip; that Religion may, and muſt be governed by the ſame Rules, as all other Affairs & Tranſactions of Humane life; and that nothing can do it but ſevere Laws, nor they neither, unleſs ſeverely executed. And ſo I ſubmit it to the conſideration of Publick Authority, and am but little doubtful of the Approbation of all that are friends to Peace and Government. But whatever the event may prove to others, it is not a little ſatisfaction that I reap to my ſelf, in reflecting upon that Candor and Integrity, I have uſed through the whole Diſcourſe: In that, as I have freely and impartially repreſented the moſt ſerious reſult of mine own thoughts; ſo withal have I been not a little ſolicitous, not to baulk any thing material in the Controverſie; have encountred all their moſt weighty and conſiderable Objections, have prevented all manner of eſcapes and ſubterfuges, and have not waved any thing, becauſe it was too hard to be anſwered; though ſome things I have, becauſe too eaſie.

easie. And upon review of the whole, I have confidence (perhaps it may be boldness) enough to challenge the Reader, if he will but be as ingenuous as he ought, to be as severe as he will; and in defiance to all Enemies of Peace and Government, of what Name or Sect soever, to conclude all in the words of *Pilate* to the turbulent *Jews*, *What I have written, I have written.*

FINIS.